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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES | News Corp ****** TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 ~ VOL. CCLXXXV NO. 5 WSJ.com ★★★★ $5.00

DJIA 42706.56 ▼ 25.57 0.06% NASDAQ 19864.98 ▲ 1.2% STOXX 600 513.02 ▲ 1.0% 10-YR. TREAS. ▼ 5/32, yield 4.616% OIL $73.56 ▼ $0.40 GOLD $2,638.40 ▼ $6.60 EURO $1.0391 YEN 157.65

What's News

Business & Finance

◆ **The U.S. economy** added more than two million jobs over the past year, but more people who are out of work are having a hard time finding new positions. **A1**

◆ **The Fed's top** supervisory official said he would step down, avoiding a potential legal fight with the incoming Trump administration. **A2**

◆ **U.S. stocks ended mixed,** with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq advancing 0.6% and 1.2%, respectively, and the Dow industrials retreating 0.1%. **B1**

◆ **U.S. Steel and Nippon** Steel filed lawsuits accusing Biden, the president of the steelworkers union and the CEO of a rival company of conspiring to scuttle their $14.1 billion tie-up. **A2**

◆ **Meta Platforms said** UFC President Dana White joined its board of directors, along with Exor CEO John Elkann and tech investor Charlie Songhurst. **B3**

◆ **Smithfield filed for an** initial public offering, a move that would again take the pork producer public in the U.S. after it was acquired by China's WH Group in 2013. **B3**

◆ **Arcelor-Mittal** South Africa will wind down its long-steel-products business after weak economic conditions, high costs and Chinese steel imports weighed on the company. **B4**

◆ **Foxconn posted** record revenue for the fourth quarter, helped by robust demand for servers to power burgeoning artificial-intelligence technologies. **B3**

◆ **Ulta said Kecia Steelman** will succeed David Kimbell as chief executive, as the company aims to reaccelerate its sales amid a global slowdown in the beauty market. **B4**

World-Wide

◆ **Congress quickly** and smoothly certified President-elect Trump's election victory, a sharp contrast to four years earlier, when a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol and temporarily halted the confirmation of President Biden. **A1, A4**

◆ **Prime Minister Trudeau** said he would resign, making him the latest global progressive leader to fall from power and leaving Canada rudderless as it prepares to contend with Trump's threats to upend free trade in North America. **A1**

◆ **Trump attempted** to block his hush-money sentencing, arguing that the trial judge wrongly scheduled it before the president-elect's return to the White House. **A4**

◆ **Iranian forces have** largely withdrawn from Syria following the Assad regime's collapse, U.S., European and Arab officials said, in a blow to Tehran's strategy for projecting power in the Middle East. **A6**

◆ **A Chinese-owned vessel** cut an undersea fiber-optic cable near Taiwan, Taiwanese authorities said, causing minimal service disruption but underlining the vulnerability of the island and its internet. **A9**

◆ **North Korea carried out** an intermediate-range missile test, ending a nearly two-month hiatus in weapons trials and signaling a reluctance to return to diplomacy with the U.S. **A9**

◆ **Austria's Freedom Party** was tasked with trying to form what could become the nation's first far-right-led government since World War II, adding to the trend of anti-immigrant and populist parties gaining ground across Europe. **A7**

CONTENTS

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SAUL LOEB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Vice President Kamala Harris, at the side of House Speaker Mike Johnson, had the duty Monday of announcing her election loss.

Congress Ratifies Trump's Win In Peaceful Session, Unlike '21

WASHINGTON—Congress quickly and smoothly certified President-elect Donald Trump's election victory Monday, a sharp contrast to four years earlier when a pro-Trump mob stormed the Capitol and temporarily halted the confirmation of President Biden's win.

By Kristina Peterson, Katy Stech Ferek and Xavier Martinez

Unlike in 2021, when the proceedings stretched out over two days, no objections were raised. No angry crowd gathered and no lawmakers were evacuated. The proceedings wrapped up in well under an hour. But tensions over the violence of that day, which led to Trump's second impeachment, continued to simmer.

Lawmakers went ahead with their duties despite a snowstorm that hit Washington and closed schools and many businesses. Federal law requires Congress to convene for a joint session on Jan. 6 after a presidential election to count and ratify the 538 Electoral College votes certified by the 50 states and District of Columbia.

Shortly before 1 p.m., Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, walked onto the House floor in her role as president of the Senate, charged Monday with presiding over the certification of the election she lost. As senators poured in and greeted House colleagues, the din of the packed chamber rose to a loud buzz.

Congressional pages brought in the states' election certificates in leather boxes and staffers sliced through the envelopes with letter openers. Lawmakers read out the results of each state's election one by one, affirming that they were accurate.

Harris, standing next to House Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.), gave the final result: "The votes for president of the United States are as follows. Donald J. Trump of the state of Florida has received 312 votes. Kamala D. Harris... of the state of California has

Please turn to page A4

◆ **Trump seeks to cancel sentencing**............................ **A4**

Jobless Find It Harder To Get New Work

More time is spent seeking a position, with the pain mostly in white-collar sectors

BY MATT GROSSMAN AND JASMINE LI

The U.S. economy has added more than two million jobs over the past year. But more people who are out of work are having a hard time getting back in.

As of November, more than seven million Americans were unemployed, meaning they didn't have work and were trying to find it. More than 1.6 million of those jobless workers had been job hunting for at least six months, according to the Labor Department. The number of people searching for that long is up more than 50% since the end of 2022.

On average, it now takes people about six months to find a job, about a month longer than it did during the postpandemic hiring boom in early 2023, according to the Labor Department. The pain is largely in high-paying white-collar jobs, including in tech, law and media, where businesses grew fast when the economy reopened from the pandemic but now have less need for new hires.

A labor market that looks healthy in the headlines is, under the surface, weaker than it seems. The unemployment rate, at 4.2%, remains well below the average during the de-

Please turn to page A5

Musk Rattles Politics In Europe With Posts

BY MAX COLCHESTER AND BERTRAND BENOIT

Elon Musk is throwing grenades into Europe's political mainstream over issues from immigration to free speech, creating a dilemma for governments as they try to respond to the tech billionaire and key adviser to the incoming Trump administration.

Musk has weighed in with incendiary posts on European politics, including supporting a far-right party ahead of an election in Germany, accusing the U.K.'s prime minister of being complicit in rape, denouncing judges in Italy and slamming the European Commission.

The posts from the world's richest man has morphed into a diplomatic headache, and caught several mainstream European political parties on the back foot. Weeks ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration, many European leaders have been wary of publicly calling out Musk, worried it would damage relations with Trump and prod the tech entrepreneur to double down on his attacks.

But the repeated posts to his 210 million followers are setting the news agenda in several of those countries, making it impossible to ignore. Europe's unpopular leaders worry that Musk could use X to mobilize disenchanted voters as weak economic growth erodes trust in mainstream politics and stoked political instability.

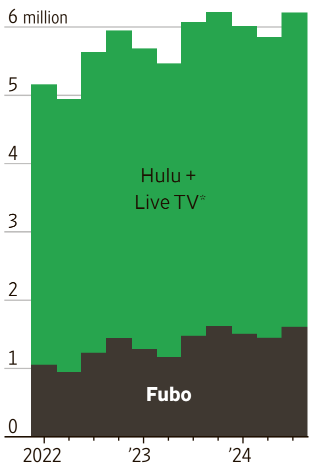
"Ten years ago if someone had told us the owner of one of the world's biggest social-

Please turn to page A7

Disney, Fubo Strike a Deal

Disney is combining its Hulu + Live TV streaming service with sports-focused FuboTV. **B1**

Subscribers in North America, quarterly



*Disney's latest fiscal quarter ended Sept. 28
Sources: Walt Disney; FuboTV

Canada's Trudeau Plans to Step Down

BY VIPAL MONGA AND PAUL VIEIRA

OTTAWA—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Monday said he would resign, making him the latest global progressive leader to fall from power and leaving Canada rudderless as it prepares to contend with President-elect Donald Trump's threats to upend free trade in North America.

Trudeau's resignation caps a decadelong political career during which the 53-year-old rose to global political stardom as a young, handsome and unabashed progressive whose appeal faded over time, until he became so unpopular that his Liberal Party forced him to step down before elections that must happen no later than October.

DAVID KAWAI/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Justin Trudeau on Monday

Trudeau said he would stay on until the party picks a new leader, a process that could take months and draw from the ranks of critics who pushed him out. The Liberal Party trails badly in the polls to the

Please turn to page A8

Taxidermist's Reputation Is Mounting

* * *

A-listers in need of decor call Amber Maykut

BY LIZA WEISSTUCH

David Burtka got the call just before Thanksgiving. After almost three years of waiting, he was getting a unicorn.

It was actually a miniature white horse that taxidermist Amber Maykut found for him at an auction house in England. She'll fix up the vintage piece and replace the decorative horn. It will go on a wall—above the boar and beside the wildebeest—at the Hamptons home that the chef and actor owns with his husband, television and Broadway star Neil Patrick Harris.

"Amber uses so many dif-

Please turn to page A12

Concerns Grow Over Stress of Military Life

Two acts of New Year's violence are stark reminder of a vexing issue

The two men had vastly different military careers that seemed unlikely to intersect. Army Master Sgt. Matthew Livelsberger was an elite spe-

By Vera Bergengruen, Nancy A. Youssef and Tawnell D. Hobbs

cial forces soldier who repeatedly deployed to the front lines from Africa to Afghanistan, while Army Staff Sgt. Shamsud-Din Jabbar spent years quietly supporting troops through administrative work.

Their stories overlapped in two shocking acts in the early hours of 2025, with an exploded Tesla Cybertruck in Las Vegas, in what authorities have determined was a suicide, and a terrorist attack that killed 14 in New Orleans. The two episodes have become stark reminders of one of the most persistent and vexing threats facing the U.S. military: a tragic turn toward violence within the ranks, whether from extremist radicalization or mental-health struggles.

Military experts and veterans say that while Jabbar and Livelsberger's actions aren't representative of the men and women who serve, the struggles and pressures that haunted them are all too common. The Department of Defense has acknowledged for years that too many of its service members have fallen sway to extremist ideologies

Please turn to page A10

U.S. NEWS

FROM TOP: JUSTIN MERRIMAN/BLOOMBERG NEWS, JOHN KUNTZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A U.S. Steel facility in Pennsylvania. The company and Nippon Steel accused President Biden, the president of the steelworkers union and Cleveland-Cliffs Chief Executive Officer Lourenco Goncalves, shown below, of conspiring to scuttle their $14.1 billion merger.

Steelmakers Sue Over U.S. Rejection of Deal

By Bob Tita

U.S. Steel and **Nippon Steel** filed a pair of lawsuits Monday accusing President Biden, the president of the steelworkers union and the chief executive of a rival company of conspiring to scuttle their $14.1 billion tie-up.

Biden on Friday rejected Nippon Steel's purchase of the storied American steelmaker, citing national-security concerns.

In one lawsuit the companies asked the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals to set aside the decision, claiming that election-year politics subverted a national-security review process. Also named in the suit were the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S., Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Cfius is a federal interagency panel charged with probing foreign investments in U.S. companies for national-security risks. The companies want the appeals court to order a new national security review of the deal.

In a separate suit filed in Pittsburgh federal court, the companies accused **Cleveland-Cliffs**, its CEO Lourenco Goncalves and United Steelworkers President Dave McCall of racketeering and anticompetitive activities to keep Nippon Steel from completing the sale. Cliffs attempted to acquire U.S. Steel in 2023 with the union's backing, but was outbid by Nippon Steel, which clinched a deal in December of that year.

"The president and Cfius corrupted and compromised a critical mechanism for the protection of America's national security in order to serve the president's personal political agenda," Nippon Steel and U.S. Steel said in their complaint.

A White House spokeswoman said Biden's decision was based on national security and trade experts' determination that the deal would create risks to the U.S. "President Biden will never hesitate to protect the security of this nation, its infrastructure and the resilience of its supply chains," she said. The Treasury Department, lead agency for Cfius, declined to comment.

McCall said the United Steelworkers union is reviewing the complaint and will "vigorously defend against these baseless allegations."

Cleveland-Cliffs said it is prepared to fight the lawsuit. "U.S. Steel made their bed when they rejected an all-American solution and insisted on pursuing a doomed-to-fail sale to Nippon Steel," said Goncalves, Cliffs's CEO.

U.S. Steel shares closed 8.1% higher on Monday, as steel stocks rallied and U.S. stock indexes were little changed. Nippon Steel shares slipped 0.8% in Japanese trading.

Court challenges to the Cfius review process and president's authority over foreign business deals have been sparse over the years.

Ralls Corp., a Chinese-owned company, nearly a decade ago sued after Cfius identified national-security risks to the company's purchase of wind-farm projects near a U.S. Navy weapons training base in Oregon. A federal appeals court ruled that the company's due-process rights were violated by the Cfius review, but the court didn't overturn then-President Barack Obama's order that Ralls had to sell the wind farms. The company and the government eventually reached a settlement that allowed Ralls to sell the wind farms.

The lawsuits come as U.S. Steel and Nippon Steel have been ordered to terminate their deal, which would have been the largest in the American steel industry in years. U.S. Steel has warned that it might move its Pittsburgh headquarters and close some of its older steel mills if it didn't find a buyer for the company.

Biden's decision to block the sale of an old-line maker of commodity materials like U.S. Steel is rare for a president, particularly when the buyer is a Japanese company. U.S. Steel makes sheet steel, primarily for the automotive, appliance and construction industries.

"Japan is a longstanding ally of the United States, and Cfius has routinely permitted Japanese investments into similar U.S.-based manufacturing companies over the past decade. None was blocked for any reason," the companies said in their lawsuit against the government.

Biden signaled in March that he was opposed to foreign ownership of U.S. Steel, a position that the steelworkers union had made repeatedly in letters to members and public statements.

The suit filed in D.C. appeals court accused Biden and his advisers of pledging to union leaders to block the deal, and subverting the national-security review process. The union endorsed Biden for re-election and later Vice President Kamala Harris.

President-elect Donald Trump has also opposed the deal publicly over the past year. He has pledged to impose tariffs on imported goods, and raising tariffs on imported steel would give domestic producers more leverage to raise their prices.

The companies in the lawsuit accused Cfius of not engaging in talks, also saying the security concerns presented about the transaction were "riddled with factual inaccuracies and parroted key talking points from [United Steelworkers] leadership."

The companies said three drafts of a national-security agreement were submitted to Cfius to address concerns about the deal. Those included commitments for nearly $3 billion of investments in U.S. Steel's plants, guarantees to produce steel in the U.S. and a proposal to grant Cfius approval over independent members of a board that would oversee U.S. Steel's operation. The committee never responded to any of the proposals, according to the companies.

The companies want the appeals court to order a new national-security review. At the same time, they are pursuing injunctions against McCall and Goncalves to halt what Nippon Steel and U.S. Steel described as a coordinated effort to disparage the deal and engage in anticompetitive activities to aid Cliffs' acquisition of U.S. Steel.

Fed's Top Banking Regulator To Quit Post

By Dylan Tokar

The Federal Reserve's top supervisory official on Monday said he would step down from his position, avoiding a potential legal fight with the incoming Trump administration.

Vice Chair for Supervision Michael Barr, the agency's top banking regulator, said he would resign from his position at the end of February, or sooner if Trump appoints a successor. He will continue to serve on the Fed's board of governors. His term in that role extends until January 2032.

Members of the incoming Trump administration have expressed criticism of the Fed's aggressive stance toward regulating banks. Barr has been a leading proponent of tougher regulation.

"The risk of a dispute over the position could be a distraction from our mission," Barr said in a statement. "In the current environment, I've determined that I would be more effective in serving the American people from my role as governor."

By stepping down voluntarily but remaining a governor, Barr not only sidesteps a potential legal battle but denies the Trump administration a chance to exert greater control over the Fed's monetary and regulatory policy. Barr is among four Democrats appointed to the Fed's board of governors.

When asked last year if Trump has the legal authority to fire Barr and Chair Jerome Powell, both have said he does not. The president's ability to remove a Federal Reserve chair hasn't been tested in the courts.

Barr's decision to resign doesn't signal that Chair Powell might also do so, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Trump can appoint a new governor only if an existing governor leaves or their term expires. The next time one of the seven governors' terms expires isn't until January 2026.

In the meantime, Trump must nominate a new vice chair from the other current governors. Without a vacancy, Trump has no ready way to appoint a governor who could serve as designated successor to Powell, whose term ends in May 2026.

The Fed on Monday said it didn't intend to make any major decisions regarding banking regulations until a successor is appointed.

Governor Sees More Gradual Rate Cuts

By Matt Grossman

Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook said Monday that the central bank can afford to take a more gradual approach to interest-rate cuts in the months ahead, even though further reductions will likely be required eventually.

Speaking at a conference at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Cook said the Federal Reserve's percentage-point reduction to its benchmark interest rate since September has significantly reduced how much the central bank's policy stance is doing to cool the economy.

With inflation still above target, a more gradual approach to further rate cuts could be the right move going forward, she said.

"All along, I envisioned moving more quickly in the early stages of our easing campaign and then easing more gradually as the policy rate came closer to neutral," Cook said, according to a published text of her remarks.

After raising interest rates to the highest level in more than a decade to fight inflation after the pandemic, the Fed began lowering them again in September as price increases receded, starting with an aggressive half-point rate cut.

The Fed followed that move with additional quarter-point cuts in November and December.

Factory Orders Declined in November

LAUREN PETRACCA/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Orders for U.S. manufactured goods fell in November, reversing course after an October increase.

Manufacturers' new orders totaled $586.1 billion in November, down 0.4% from $588.2 billion in October, according to the Commerce Department. Economists polled by The Wall Street Journal had expected a 0.3% decline in orders.

Orders for durable goods, intended for longer-term use, did worse, declining by 1.2%. Declining orders for ships and boats, some defense equipment and fabricated metal products outweighed gains in orders for photography equipment, metalworking machinery and electric-lighting equipment. Nondurable goods orders grew 0.4%.

Other indicators from the report on factory activity showed a more positive trend. Shipments grew by 0.1% to $586.3 billion, ending a three-month stretch of declines.

Above, a worker on the production floor at Optimax Systems' precision optics facility in Ontario, N.Y.

—Matt Grossman

CORRECTIONS & AMPLIFICATIONS

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Storm Keeps Grip On Nation

A huge swath of the U.S. was blasted with ice, snow and wind on Monday as the polar vortex that dipped south over the weekend kept much of the country east of the Rockies in its frigid grip.

The storm system brought disruption to areas of the country that usually escape winter's wrath, downing trees in some Southern states and threatening a freeze in Florida.

In Annapolis, Md., at right, a man took to his skies to travel down Main Street.

—Associated Press

Watch a Video

Scan this code to see how the winter storm is making travel hazardous.

SUSAN WALSH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tariffs Bring Hope, Caution in Heartland

New levies seen as good for sales, bad for costs at Kansas hand-truck factory

By Hannah Miao

WICHITA, Kan.—Donald Trump's exact plans to raise tariffs remain a mystery, even to Phil Ruffin, a close friend and business partner of the president-elect.

Increased tariffs could boost business for Harper Trucks, a small hand-truck manufacturer Ruffin has owned for more than four decades, or end up raising costs of parts the factory imports from China. (A hand truck, sometimes called a dolly or a hand trolley, is a small, wheeled cart used to move heavy objects.)

Tariff policy could be critical for American manufacturers such as Harper, fighting to survive. Harper's sales volumes have fallen in recent years, which Ruffin blames on cheap hand-truck imports, largely from Vietnam. Tariffs stand to make Harper's made-in-America products more attractive by making foreign goods more expensive through a tax paid by importers.

"That'll make us more competitive," Ruffin said of tariffs. "But will that get us any more business? I don't know, I'm not sure about that."

Trump on the campaign trail proposed a 10% to 20% tariff on all imports and a tariff increase on China to at least 60%. More recently, he threatened to impose a 25% tariff on goods from Canada and Mexico and an additional 10% tariff on Chinese imports.

Tariffs, which are meant to help U.S. manufacturing, among other goals, also raise an even larger question for the American economy: Are lower-wage manufacturing jobs worth fighting for?

Harper, like many manufacturers, already struggles to hire workers. And the range of outcomes it faces shows the complex and often contradictory ripple effects of tariffs for American manufacturers enmeshed with global supply chains.

SHANE BROWN FOR WSJ (2)

A worker grinds a hand-truck part at Harper Trucks in Wichita, Kan. Billionaire owner Phil Ruffin, below, a friend and business partner of Donald Trump, has owned the company since 1981.

Outlier in an empire

The hand-truck factory is an outlier in Ruffin's empire of casinos and hotels. Ruffin, 89 years old, bought Harper, which has been around almost as long as he has been alive, in 1981—long before he became a billionaire. Ruffin owns Treasure Island on the Vegas Strip and co-owns the Trump International Hotel Las Vegas with the president-elect. Harper, he told the Wichita Eagle in 2019, is a "pimple on my butt."

Harper employs about 120 people. Signs throughout the factory are written in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Workers use machines to shape steel and aluminum into the components of the hand trucks. The pieces make their way through welding, painting and assembly, then are packaged for shipping. Products leave the factory with red, white and blue stickers saying "Made in the USA with pride."

Domestic manufacturers remained the largest supplier of hand trucks to the U.S. through 2014, according to U.S. International Trade Commission reviews. But by 2019, imports from countries outside of China, primarily Vietnam and Taiwan, overtook domestic producers in market share.

In recent years, Vietnam emerged as a major winner in Trump's first trade war, becoming a magnet for Chinese manufacturers looking to get around tariffs. That explains why the bosses at Harper are cautiously optimistic about Trump's proposal to add tariffs on all imports.

"I would take a tariff on Vietnam if it made the playing field equal," said Harper's senior vice president and general manager, Chris Squires. A mug in his office reads, "Don't blame me I voted for Trump."

He doesn't think a 10% tax on imports from Vietnam is likely to move the needle. But a 20% tariff might make Harper more appealing to the retailers that buy hand trucks.

Advocates of tariffs say duties can help bolster U.S. industries, respond to other countries' trade practices and bring in revenue for the government. They say tariffs can help make the U.S. economy less reliant on other countries.

Winners and losers

A U.S. International Trade Commission report found that Trump's 2018 tariffs on steel and aluminum reduced imports, increased U.S. production of those products and were followed by the announcement of new domestic investments by steel and aluminum companies.

The same report found that production fell for downstream manufacturers that use steel and aluminum. Some studies found that higher costs for parts and retaliatory tariffs hurt domestic producers, outweighing the benefits of tariffs to other parts of the manufacturing industry.

"I worry about the unintended consequences," said Mike Rose, Harper's controller.

Harper imports wheels and casters from China and buys other pieces of small hardware sourced abroad, so it anticipates those costs to go up if tariffs increase. It is in the process of switching some of its wheel purchases to a U.S. maker, but doesn't expect to be able to source all of its parts domestically.

Harper raised prices when tariffs from Trump's first term increased costs, and is prepared to do so again to meet its target profit margin if Trump lifts tariffs further.

◆ Chinese parts create tariff risk for U.S. bikes.............. B1

Hiring Isn't Easy In Wichita, Kan.

Harper Trucks has struggled to fill its ranks, with the unemployment rate in Wichita, Kan., hovering around 3% for much of the past few years.

At times, Harper has turned to temporary staffing agencies and having employees work overtime. "Just finding good employees has been very challenging," said the company's controller, Mike Rose.

Most employees make between $16 and $22 an hour, according to Rose. Other costs, including for medical insurance and electricity for the factory, keep climbing.

In some ways, Harper has been slow to adapt to technological changes. It only recently hired a sales manager focused on e-commerce and is just starting to experiment with using social media to market its products.

But Harper is also trying to patent novel designs to stand out and drum up business. The company's vice president, engineering manager and assistant plant manager, Jose Mendoza, designed a five-in-one hand truck that switches positions with a press of a button, which Harper is rolling out and hoping could be a new bestseller.

How Customs Screens for Prohibited Goods at U.S. Ports

By Dylan Tokar

At the seaport in Savannah, Ga., U.S. Customs and Border Protection Watch Commander James Long stands in a cavernous warehouse looking over rows of boxes unpacked from cargo containers and laid out across a concrete floor.

The boxes, some neatly packed and others bursting at the seams, contain everything from electric scooters to clothing and lamps. Long and his team must sift through them, looking for items that don't meet U.S. product safety standards or that violate intellectual-property laws. Other teams screen agricultural products and search for drugs, guns and other contraband.

"We call it looking for the bugs and the thugs," Long says.

Long is a front-line enforcer of U.S. tariffs and trade laws, but some of the most important work conducted by his agency takes place under the fluorescent lights of a nearby laboratory.

A raft of new regulations, including a law banning goods made with forced labor in China, have customs officials and companies looking for ways to bring greater transparency to global supply lines.

To enforce the new rules, CBP is upgrading several of its labs, adding equipment and know-how that enable the agency to look into the atomic composition of merchandise for clues about their origin.

More than 2.5 million loaded containers, measured in 20-foot equivalent units, were imported through the Savannah port last year. Nearly all of them receive some level of screening, including by targeting officers who pore over manifests of incoming cargo ships.

The targeting officers decide which containers get inspected on arrival. CBP's field team in Savannah pulled aside roughly 29,000 containers last year for extra screening, looking for prohibited products and illicit goods like fentanyl.

When they reach Savannah, the first stop for the boxes is a giant X-ray machine.

In 2021, U.S. lawmakers passed the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. The law bans goods from the Xinjiang region of China on the presumption they were produced with forced labor by Uyghurs, a Muslim minority group.

CBP plans to use the new equipment at its Savannah lab to help identify whether any imported garments are made with cotton produced in Xinjiang. The region in western China grows about 20% of the world's cotton.

The agency's lab in Savannah is one of two that can conduct advanced isotopic testing, a method that identifies unique chemical markers in materials that vary based on the environment where a crop is grown.

The testing is laborious and takes a minimum of about two weeks to complete. Cotton fibers must be extracted from a garment, dried and pulverized, and weighed into 400 microgram samples, which are placed in tiny silver cups.

The silver cups are shaped into balls using tweezers. A single sample carousel contains nearly 100 of these tiny cotton dumplings.

"It takes a lot of time and a lot of precision to do it accurately," says Randall Phillips, branch chief of CBP's Savannah lab.

The device that analyzes the cotton's isotopes is known as a stable isotope mass spectrometer. Cotton samples are pyrolyzed, or turned into hydrogen and carbon monoxide gases at a high temperature in an inert atmosphere. The gas molecules are then trapped and their isotopes counted.

By extracting what is known as an isotopic fingerprint, CBP's scientists can compare the results with a database of fingerprints from around the world to help determine the cotton's origin.

Back at the port, field officers found a problem with an imported container, but it isn't cotton from Xinjiang.

A review found snails in a shipment. Officers lined the outside of the container with salt to keep the intruders captive while the container's fate is decided. "Anything that can come in and harm the U.S. agricultural environment—they can either export it or it gets fumigated," Long says.

HENRY TAYLOR FOR WSJ (3)

Watch Commander James Long looks over automotive parts that have been stopped for inspection at Savannah's seaport. A textile analyst, center, pulls individual yarn strands out of a shirt to test if the cotton is from Xinjiang, China. The cotton strands are put into tiny silver cups for stable isotope analysis.

Electoral Vote Count Rekindles Memories of 2021 Riot

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JOSE LUIS MAGANA/ASSOCIATED PRESS; CHENEY ORR/REUTERS; VICTOR J. BLUE/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Pro-Donald Trump rioters, above, stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in an effort to interfere with the count of President Biden's 2020 election victory. The rioters then stormed through the halls of Congress, left. Nearly 1,600 people were charged following the events of that day, with more than a third charged with crimes involving assaulting, resisting or obstructing law enforcement. Scan the above code for a video about the violence of that day and Trump's vow to pardon at least some of the rioters.

Congress Ratifies '24 Result

Continued from Page One

received 226 votes."

Republicans cheered the conclusion of the certification, rising to their feet and snapping selfies with Vice President-elect JD Vance. Trump, who was at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, called the certification "a big moment in history. MAGA!" in a post on social media.

Trump won the 2024 election by clawing back several swing states, including Michigan and Pennsylvania, to the Republican column. He also won the popular vote, ending with 49.9%, compared with 48.4% for Harris.

Harris reflected on her role in certifying her defeat.

"One of the most important pillars of our democracy is that there will be a peaceful transfer of power," Harris said. "Today I did what I have done my entire career, which is take seriously the oath that I have taken many times, to support and defend the Constitution of the United States."

On Jan. 6, 2021, a swarm of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, climbing its walls, ransacking its offices and forcing the evacuation of lawmakers. Later that month, the House impeached Trump for a second time, alleging he encouraged the mob to attack the Capitol. He was acquitted by the Senate. Lawmakers returned to the Capitol to complete the certification in the early-morning hours of Jan. 7, 2021. About two-thirds of House Republicans at the time voted against certifying some states' results.

About 140 Capitol and D.C. police officers were injured, according to a bipartisan Senate report released in 2021. The report linked seven deaths to the attack and its aftermath.

Some lawmakers said Monday's events marked a return to election norms, with Democrats drawing a pointed contrast between how the two parties handled losing. Trump had falsely claimed the 2020 election was stolen, including at a rally the day of the Capitol riot at the Ellipse.

Trump was indicted in federal court and separately in Georgia state court on election-interference charges. Federal prosecutors dropped their case after the 2024 election, citing a Justice Department policy against prosecuting a sitting president; the Georgia case is pending but is in disarray.

"I'd like to be able to say that we've restored the normal, peaceful transfer of power. But of course we won't know until Trump's party loses an election whether they're actually willing to accept the constitutional process as it's supposed to work," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee.

Republicans said the day's uneventfulness reflected the integrity of the presidential election.

"There were minimal irregularities throughout the election process," said Rep. Dan Meuser (R., Pa.). "That's why there were no objections."

In late 2022, Congress passed legislation in response to the 2021 attack that makes it clear that the vice president's role is merely to count the votes publicly and that he or she has no power to alter the results. On Jan. 6, 2021, Trump pressured then-Vice President Mike Pence to reject some electors unilaterally to block Biden's win, but Pence refused. The 2022 law raised the threshold to sustain an objection to a state's electors to one-fifth of both chambers, up from one House member and one senator.

"I welcome the return of order and civility," Pence said on social media Monday. He said it was "particularly admirable that Vice President Harris would preside over the certification of a presidential election that she lost."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R., S.D.) congratulated Trump on his victory without dwelling on the events of four years ago. Republicans won both chambers of Congress along with the White House in the November elections, and are set to roll out sweeping border-control and tax-cuts legislation.

"The Republican coalition is broad and strong and growing," Thune said. "Now the work begins of delivering on our agenda."

Trump has said he is considering pardoning as early as his first day in office some of the more than 1,500 people who have been charged in connection with the Jan. 6 riot. A Trump transition spokeswoman has said Trump will make all pardon decisions on a case-by-case basis.

To make it to the Capitol on Monday amid the snow, some lawmakers had chosen to remain in Washington over the weekend, rather than risk traveling home. Some lawmakers posted photos and videos of their wintry walks to the Capitol, as snow piled up about a half-foot deep in the morning and continued to fall in the afternoon.

Monday's snowy proceedings posed an inconvenience to another constituency: schoolchildren.

One of Washington's best sledding hills—from the west side of the House chamber down toward the U.S. Botanic Garden—wasn't open to the public because of the security measures surrounding the electoral certification and inauguration.

—Catherine Lucey and Richard Rubin contributed to this article.

Trump Attempts To Block Criminal Sentencing

BY CORINNE RAMEY

Donald Trump launched an effort to block his hush-money sentencing set for later this week, arguing that the trial judge wrongly scheduled it before the president-elect's return to the White House.

Lawyers for Trump first asked Justice Juan Merchan, who oversaw the trial that led to Trump's conviction on 34 felonies, to put all proceedings in the case on hold while the president-elect pursues appeals of recent rulings. Merchan on Monday denied that bid, saying that Trump's arguments repeated those he had raised in the past.

Trump's lawyers then asked a state appeals court to intervene in the case, arguing that Merchan had wrongly found the president-elect's immunity didn't extend to a sentencing during the transition period.

Merchan last week scheduled the sentencing for this Friday. The judge said he didn't intend to sentence Trump to a prison term, but rather an unconditional discharge—a sentence with no punishment. Such a sentence would keep the jury's guilty verdict on the books.

A New York jury last year found Trump guilty of falsifying business records for covering up a hush-money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels. Daniels had alleged she had an affair with Trump, which he denied. Prosecutors said Trump, a tabloid publisher and his former lawyer conspired to influence the 2016 election by buying up negative stories that could hurt the then-candidate's electoral prospects.

Trump has cast the case as politically motivated. In a series of social-media posts over the weekend, he railed against Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat who brought the case, and the judge. He said he never falsified business records.

"IT'S ALL RIGGED, in this case against a political opponent, ME!!!" Trump wrote.

In a filing made public Monday, Trump's lawyers argued to Merchan that he shouldn't be sentenced during the transition period. "Forcing the President to defend a criminal case—especially at a sentencing hearing ten days before he is due to become President again," violates Trump's presidential immunity, his lawyers wrote.

Bragg said in a filing Monday that the sentencing would likely take less than an hour, Trump could appear virtually and that the expected sentence was the lowest authorized under the law.

"There is no risk here of an 'extended proceeding' that impairs the discharge of defendant's official duties—duties he does not possess before January 20, 2025 in any event," Bragg's office said, referring to Trump's inauguration.

Last week, Merchan also denied Trump's bid to toss the jury's verdict. The judge said he had found no legal impediment to sentencing the president-elect and that the proceeding needed to take place before he is sworn in as president.

Pope Appoints Trump Critic as Next D.C. Archbishop

BY ALYSSA LUKPAT

Pope Francis has named Cardinal Robert McElroy, a critic of Donald Trump, as the next archbishop of Washington, D.C., two weeks before the president-elect takes office.

The pope is installing one of the country's most progressive Catholic leaders to oversee the more than 600,000 faithful around the capital. Cardinal McElroy has been an ally to the pope and a supporter of migrants and LGBT people. He has been the bishop of San Diego for nearly a decade, and the pope named him a cardinal in 2022.

The Vatican announced Cardinal McElroy's appointment Monday on the four-year anniversary of the Jan. 6 Capitol attack by Trump's supporters. In elevating Cardinal McElroy up the ranks of the Catholic Church, the pope has signaled his wish for a more liberal U.S. episcopate, the ranks of bishops.

Cardinal McElroy during Trump's first administration criticized the policy of separating migrant families. He has called for changes to the country's immigration system to help refugees and migrants.

He said at a news conference Monday that Trump's plan for a "wider indiscriminate massive deportation" would be incompatible with Catholic teachings.

"I pray that President Trump's administration and that all of those state and local legislators and governors across the whole of the country will work together to make our nation truly better," Cardinal McElroy said.

The cardinal has called for efforts to reverse climate change and has said the Catholic Church needs to be more inclusive to women and LGBT people. Pope Francis in 2023 ended the Vatican's ban on blessing same-sex couples.

"It is a demonic mystery of the human soul why so many men and women have a profound and visceral animus toward members of the L.G.B.T. communities," Cardinal McElroy wrote in 2023.

Pope Francis has denounced Trump's stances on immigration and other issues, saying that Trump's plans to build a border wall were "not Christian."

ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Cardinal Robert McElroy

Trump isn't Catholic, but some members of his coming administration are, including JD Vance, the vice president-elect. Last month, Trump named Brian Burch his ambassador to the Vatican. Burch is the president of CatholicVote, a conservative political advocacy group.

Representatives for Trump didn't return a request for comment Monday.

The pontiff enjoys a friendlier relationship with President Biden, who is Catholic. Biden is set to meet with the pope at the Vatican later this week at the pontiff's invitation.

Pope Francis said ahead of the election last year that U.S. voters had to choose the "lesser evil" of the two candidates. Without naming Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris, the pope said, "Both are against life: the one that throws out migrants and the one that kills children."

Cardinal McElroy is set to succeed Wilton Gregory, the first Black American cardinal, who resigned. The 77-year-old Gregory is two years past the standard retirement age for bishops.

The Vatican on Monday also said it was naming the first woman, Sister Simona Brambilla, to run a large Vatican office. She will be prefect of the Dicastery for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, which oversees religious orders, congregations and other institutions.

U.S. WATCH

NEW YORK

Giuliani in Contempt Over Election Case

A federal judge on Monday found Rudy Giuliani in contempt of court for failing to hand over documents to two former election workers he defamed, a development that could lead to additional fines or even jail time for the Donald Trump ally and former New York City mayor.

The judge's finding came after a two-day hearing in federal court in Manhattan.

Giuliani was questioned for hours about whether he complied with legal obligations to former election workers Ruby Freeman and her daughter Wandrea Moss, who are seeking financial documents and other information to collect on a $148 million jury verdict they won against him.

Giuliani spokesman Ted Goodman said the contempt finding was part of an "ongoing politically motivated vendetta" against the former mayor.

—Jan Wolfe

LOUISIANA

First U.S. Bird-Flu Death Is Reported

The first U.S. bird-flu death has been reported—a person in Louisiana who had been hospitalized with severe respiratory symptoms.

Louisiana health officials announced the death Monday.

Health officials have said the person was older than 65, had underlying medical problems and had been in contact with sick and dead birds in a backyard flock. They also said a genetic analysis had suggested the bird-flu virus had mutated inside the patient, which could have led to the more severe illness.

They have disclosed few other details about the person.

Since March, 66 confirmed bird-flu infections have been reported in the U.S., but previous illnesses have been mild and most have been detected among farmworkers exposed to sick poultry or dairy cows.

—Associated Press

ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PAYING RESPECTS: President Biden and first lady Jill Biden visited a memorial Monday for victims of the Jan. 1 New Orleans attack.

FROM PAGE ONE

Finding Work Gets Tougher

Continued from Page One

cade before the pandemic. But there is now just about one job posting per unemployed worker, down from two in early 2022. Strong hiring has narrowed to a thin set of industries. The government's monthly jobs report on Friday will provide another snapshot of the market's health.

"My life is on complete pause," said Olivia Palak, who was laid off in May after three months at a new company. Palak, a 32-year-old from Chicago, worked in recruiting for tech companies and management-consulting firms for about a decade. She has found some part-time contract work but has spent most of the past eight months hunting for full-time work. More than four million U.S. workers, like Palak, are stuck working part time because their hours were cut or because they can't find a full-time job, according to Labor Department figures.

There are still plenty of jobs for people looking for hands-on services work, including in the healthcare and hospitality sectors. It's a much tougher slog for office jobs, where bosses are aiming to be leaner and in some cases replacing workers with AI.

Josh McLarty, a 42-year-old from Atlanta, was laid off from his job as a testing manager at a robotics startup in April. He has applied to almost 500 jobs and interviewed for six, but received no offers.

Taking advice from friends and family, McLarty applied for lower-wage hourly jobs, including at a Publix supermarket, but had no luck there either. He worries that his résumé suggests to hourly employers that he wouldn't be in it for the long haul. And a smallish paycheck would end his eligibility for food stamps and Medicaid, but not be enough to pay his mortgage.

"You're in this really weird Catch-22," he said.

More people getting unemployment benefits are drawing on public aid longer. Data last week from the Labor Department show that 1.8 million people continued to file for previously granted unemployment benefits as of late December, near a postpandemic high.

Year-over-year wage growth has fallen to 4%, down from about 6% at the height of the early 2020s hiring spree. That's a sign that many employers don't have to jostle so hard to attract workers.

Will Wiggins III, a 36-year-old visual designer in Austin, Texas, had been freelancing on and off since 2019, after his position at an education nonprofit was eliminated. But he hasn't had any work at all since April. He now spends about 40 hours a week job-searching and has applied for hundreds of full-time roles, at times while holding his infant daughter in one arm.

"There are times where you'll put an application in at 1 a.m., and at 3 a.m. you'll get a notification saying that it's been rejected," Wiggins said. "There's literally no way that a person looked at my stuff."

To date, the labor market has been weakening primarily due to less hiring—not widespread layoffs. But once companies decide to reduce payrolls, job cuts often snowball, which could spark a much faster jump in the unemployment rate, said Veronica Clark, a Citigroup economist.

"The pessimistic way to look at weak hiring is that businesses are trying to reduce labor costs. If that's the reason, why shouldn't we get to that layoff stage at some point?" Clark said.

In a survey of consumers by the Conference Board in December, 37% said that jobs were plentiful, down from 57% in the middle of 2022. Families anxious about losing a paycheck are prone to tighten their budgets, threatening the consumer spending that has powered U.S. economic growth.

The job-market slack and slower wage gains have prompted the Federal Reserve to cut its benchmark interest rate by a full percentage point since September, even though inflation hasn't yet fallen back to the central bank's target.

Job postings on Indeed for software development, data science and marketing roles were each at least 20% below prepandemic levels late last year, said Cory Stahle, an economist for the website. Government figures show that the hiring rate in the information industry is 30% lower than just before the pandemic, while finance hiring is down by 28%.

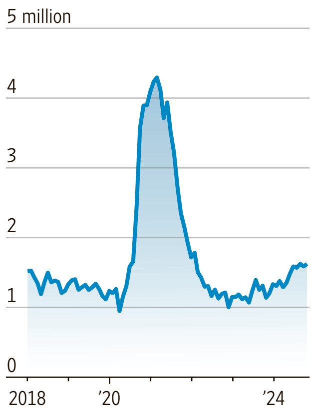
By contrast, hiring has stayed resilient in fields such as mining, manufacturing and transportation. Two industries alone, healthcare and government work, have been responsible for more than half of overall job creation over the past 12 months.

More people have been forced to switch industries to land a job. In the past six months, more than half of newly hired workers reported changing fields to get their latest position, up from a more typical level of around 40%, said Julia Pollack, an economist at ZipRecruiter, citing the company's surveys.

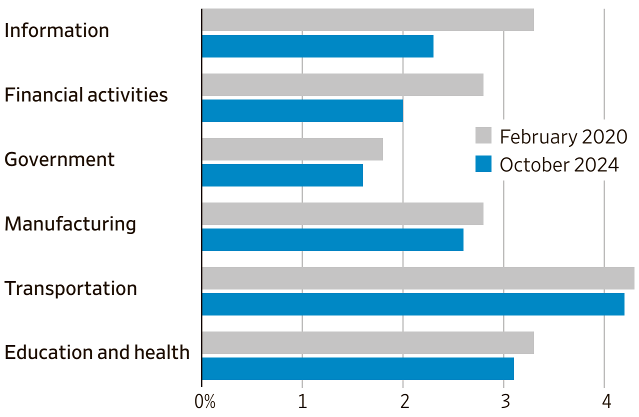
YUKI IWAMURA/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Job seekers spoke with recruiters at a job fair in New York City in September.

U.S. workers unemployed at least 27 weeks



Hiring rates, selected industries*



*The hiring rate is the number of people hired as a percentage of total industry employment.
Note: Data are seasonally adjusted.

Source: Department of Labor

WORLD NEWS

Tehran Pulls Most of Its Forces From Syria

Thousands of military staff and militia allies fled after Assad's fall in major blow to Iran

Iranian forces largely have withdrawn from Syria following the Assad regime's December collapse, according to U.S., European and Arab officials, in a significant blow to Tehran's strategy for projecting power in the Middle East.

By Lara Seligman, Jared Malsin and Benoit Faucon

The Iranian withdrawal marks the demise of a years-long effort in which Tehran used Syria as a hub in its broader regional strategy of partnering with regimes and allied militias to spread influence and wage proxy war against the U.S. and Israel. Members of Iran's elite Quds Force have fled to Iran and the militia groups have disbanded, said a senior U.S. official.

The Islamic Republic spent billions of dollars and sent thousands of military personnel and allied fighters to Syria after the Arab Spring uprising in 2011, to prop up the regime of Bashar al-Assad. Syria was Iran's main state ally in the Middle East and a critical land bridge to Hezbollah—the most powerful militia in Tehran's self-labeled "axis of resistance" alliance.

Iran, reeling from Israeli airstrikes on its assets and regional partners, began withdrawing personnel during the 11-day collapse of the Assad regime's military late last year. When rebels in Syria launched an offensive in November, Tehran was frustrated with Assad, who had remained on the sidelines over the prior year during Tehran's multifront conflict with Israel.

UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS

A poster with Syrian, Iranian, Hezbollah leaders is removed.

Iran's network in Syria once spanned the length of the country, from the east where the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps helped transport weapons and fighters into the country, to Syria's border with Lebanon, where it helped arm Hezbollah.

As the Assad regime collapsed, thousands of Iran-backed militia fighters were still in the country, mainly in eastern Syria. Most of those Syria fled to al-Qaim, a border town on the Iraqi side, said Western and Arab officials.

Iraq's Embassy in Washington and its foreign ministry didn't return a request for comment. The Iranian mission at the United Nations in New York declined to comment.

Asked if the Iranians were completely out of Syria, the State Department's top Middle East official, Barbara Leaf, said Monday, "Pretty much."

In the days after Assad's ouster, the road from Damascus to Beirut was littered with destroyed military vehicles. Most of the vehicles were pointed in the direction of the Lebanese border, suggesting a hasty attempt to pull military hardware from the country.

The swift withdrawal marks a reshaping of order in the Middle East. The shift to the new fledgling government in Damascus, led by the Sunni Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, has undercut the influence of Assad's primary backers, Russia and Shiite-led Iran.

For Iran, Syria was among its most important strategic assets, allowing it to move personnel and weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon and position forces near its arch-adversary Israel. The Assad regime's collapse severely undermines Tehran's ability to rebuild both Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, which have been battered by Israel.

Syria's new government, whose leaders have fought a long war against the Iranian-backed regime in Damascus, plans to try to keep Tehran from rebuilding its military presence in Syria. U.S. officials believe Iran will try to re-establish the land bridge, but that may be untenable, at least in the short term.

Israel Debates Its Next Target: Houthis or Iran

TEL AVIV—Over the past year, Israel's military has proved adept at taking down threats to the country's security. After the initial shock of the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, Hamas's top leadership has been largely neutralized. Iran's other big ally in the region, Hezbollah, was set back severely in Lebanon.

By Dov Lieber, Carrie Keller-Lynn and Saleh al-Batati

Now Israel is setting its sights on the Houthi rebel group in Yemen, who represent a lingering problem, regularly firing missiles at Israel—and it is a problem with few clear ways to handle.

So far, Israel has targeted what it says is energy and transportation infrastructure the Houthis use for military purposes. The next step is to hit the group's top leaders, much as its security forces did with Hamas and Hezbollah.

"We will hunt down all of the Houthis' leaders, and we will strike them just as we have done in other places," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in late December, following Israel's fourth round of airstrikes against the Houthis since July.

The Houthis have kept up a steady stream of missile attacks on Israel.

The Houthis, however, present a unique security challenge for Israel because of how distant they are from Israel, a lack of intelligence on the group and the fact that retaliatory airstrikes seem to only inflate domestic support for the group while doing little to stem attacks. A U.S.-led coalition also has failed to clamp down on Houthi provocations against global maritime shipping.

Yemen is one of the world's poorest countries, and nearly a decade of warfare with a Saudi Arabian-led coalition has done little to deter the group. Indeed, since Israel secured a cease-fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah in late November, the Houthis have become the primary security challenge for Israel in its 15-month-long confrontation with Iranian proxy groups that began after Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, attacks.

In the past weeks, the Houthis have kept up a steady stream of near-daily missile attacks on Israel.

Israel's government is under increasing pressure to respond. The Houthi attacks frequently send millions of people running to bomb shelters and disrupted the return of international airlines that ceased flying to Israel for much of the current war.

But with no clear way to deter Houthi attacks in the short term, some security specialists argue that Israel should ignore the Houthis for now and instead focus on their patron, Israel's long-term strategic threat: Iran.

"Against terror from Yemen, our solution lies in Tehran," said Benny Gantz, a former senior official in the current Israeli government, a former defense minister and now a leading opposition figure, in a press conference at the end of December.

Gantz argued that while Israel would be fighting Iran's allies for years, the country now has an opportunity for a "strategic flip" against Iran by fighting it directly.

Corners of the country who argue that Israel should hit Iran say that while it might not fully stop Houthi attacks, it will weaken the group and advance Israel's long-term strategic goal of preventing Iran from weaponizing its nuclear program.

In addition, Iran is uniquely vulnerable at present, said Yoel Guzansky, a former Gulf expert for Israel's National Security Council and now at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies.

The proxy groups Iran seeded to deter attacks from Israel have largely been subdued, while Israeli airstrikes hobbled Iran's air defenses in October. Israel should take advantage of this window before Iran and its allies can regain their strength, Guzansky said.

And if Tehran retaliates, it would provide cover for Israel to again strike Iran, and potentially its nuclear sites, some security analysts say.

Israel's military, after its most recent strikes in Yemen in late December, called the Houthis an "autonomous terrorist group" that relies on Iranian cooperation and funding to carry out attacks.

Israel's best option for a long-term solution to the problem posed by the Houthis might be to focus on building a U.S.-led regional coalition with Gulf countries also threatened by the Houthis' growing aggression, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, some analysts say. This could require Israel to make difficult compromises with the Palestinians.

But acting alone with the Houthis, who have snarled international trade by attacking ships in the Red Sea, Israel risks turning an international problem into its sole responsibility, said Alon Pinkas, a former senior Israeli diplomat.

The reality is that plenty of other governments are seeking to remove the Houthi leadership from its strongholds overlooking the Red Sea shipping lanes. Saudi Arabia would like to see them gone, and officials from Yemen's internationally recognized government, which controls most of the country's territory, have also recently called on a U.S.-led coalition that has also been targeting the rebel group to kill its leadership. Egypt too has taken a significant economic blow thanks to sagging trade through the Red Sea.

Epiphany by Any Other Name Is Still a Holiday

Jan. 6 is a multifaceted holiday, called the Feast of Epiphany, Three Kings Day and Theophany, depending on the Christian tradition doing the celebrating.

Three Kings Day recalls the visit of three Magi, or wise men, to the infant Jesus. It falls the 12th day after Christmas and closes the Christmas season.

Theophany marks the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. Orthodox Christians also know it as the Baptism of Christ. Some Eastern traditions, operating on the Julian calendar, mark Christmas on Jan. 7, making Jan. 6 Christmas Eve. The Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates Christmas on Jan. 6.

1. At the Church of Fener Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul, swimmers take part in the Blessing of the Water ceremony, jumping into the estuary known as the Golden Horn to retrieve a cross thrown into the water by a priest.

2. In the traditional Befana Regatta along the Grand Canal in Venice, rowers manning a lightweight boat called a mascareta and dressed as Befana, a gift-delivering witch from Italian folklore, race to the Rialto Bridge.

3. In Bethlehem in the West Bank, a person prays inside the Church of the Nativity, by tradition built on the site of Christ's birth and today a place of worship for Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

4. Three Kings Day in Warsaw follows the Polish tradition, with wise men proceeding through cities and towns.

5. Larger versions of the Magi parade in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania.

—*Associated Press*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SHADY ALASSAR/SOPA IMAGES/ZUMA PRESS; MUSSA ISSA QAWASMA/REUTERS; MINDAUGAS KULBIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS; MARCIN OBARA/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK; ANDREA MEROLA/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Musk Rattles Europe

Continued from Page One

media companies would support a new international reactionary movement and intervene directly in elections...who would have imagined that?" President Emmanuel Macron of France told ambassadors Monday.

Musk's bare-knuckle approach to foreign affairs highlights the challenge that U.S. allies face in navigating the next Trump presidency. The last time Trump was in the White House, foreign governments had to deal with his unpredictable late-night social media statements. Now they also have to digest Musk's.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer spent a large part of a news conference Monday that was supposed to focus on the country's overstretched health system rebutting Musk's posts about the prime minister's record in jailing child rapists during a previous stint as the U.K.'s chief prosecutor over a decade ago. Starmer said he was "not going to individualise this to Elon Musk or anyone else" but also spent several minutes defending his record and denouncing those "that are spreading lies and misinformation."

Ahead of Starmer's news conference, Musk had pinned a message to the top of his X feed: "America should liberate the people of Britain from their tyrannical government." Starmer declined to comment.

European politicians and business people opine on U.S. politics all the time—often to criticize Trump—but few have any influence on U.S. voters. Political strategists here, however, fear Musk could tilt the playing field by wielding his X platform as a powerful tool to campaign for parties he backs.

In Germany, some strategists and politicians worry Musk's personal views could influence a February general election.

LEON NEAL/PRESS POOL

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer defended himself against Elon Musk's criticism at a news conference on Monday.

Musk last year called Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany a "fool," and has backed Germany's far-right AfD party. He is hosting a live chat on X this week with AfD co-chair Alice Weidel, and wrote an op-ed in a prominent German newspaper calling her party "the last spark of hope for this country."

The AfD is further to the right than most other comparable anti-establishment, anti-immigration parties in Europe. Germany's domestic-intelligence agency has classified some of the AfD's regional chapters as extremist organizations. The party's draft electoral platform says sanctions against Russia should be lifted, Germany's foreign and energy policy freed of U.S. influences, and Germany should leave the EU.

Musk's endorsement "is a welcome counterpoint to the negative campaign against us that's happening everyday in Germany" and could be a "game-changer," said Leif-Erik Holm, a senior AfD lawmaker.

Friedrich Merz, chairman of the center-right CDU and, according to polls, the most likely winner of the February vote, told German media that Musk's intervention is "intrusive and presumptuous," adding that "I cannot remember a comparable case of interference in the election campaign of a friendly country in the history of Western democracies."

Many leaders don't want to call out Musk for fear of angering Trump.

Trump's former strategist Steve Bannon tried to build a network of right-wing parties ahead of elections for the EU parliament in 2019, with limited effect. Musk, by focusing on domestic European elections and armed with a social-media company, could be more successful, says José Ignacio Torreblanca, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank. "He sees himself as a savior of U.S. democracy from the progressives," Torreblanca said. "He thinks this should...continue in Europe."

Still, there are hurdles. In Britain, for instance, only 26% of people have a positive view of Musk, the same level as Starmer, according to pollster YouGov, and average daily users of X has dropped from 10.3 million a day in May 2022 to 8.6 million in May 2024, says the regulator Ofcom. X's own figures show the average number of active users across the EU was down about 5 million between October 2023 and summer of 2024.

The EU commission, the bloc's executive branch, said Monday that it might expand a probe into X to include the livestream Musk is hosting with Germany's AfD. "You're free to express your views, but there are certain limits to that," commission spokesman Thomas Regnier said. Musk has said he would challenge any EU findings against X in court.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy is one of the few Western European leaders whom Musk admires. They have met several times since she won power in 2022. The right-wing leader is more attuned than most of her European peers with his opinions on immigration, falling birthrates and "wokeism."

Meloni, told newspaper Corriere della Sera in an article published Friday, that while she sometimes disagrees with Musk, "it makes me laugh how people who until yesterday hailed Musk as a genius now depict him as a monster, just because he chose what is considered the 'wrong' side of the barricades."

Austria's Far-Right Party Gets Its Chance

By Georgi Kantchev

Austria's Freedom Party was tasked with trying to form what could become the nation's first far-right-led government since World War II, adding to the trend of anti-immigrant and populist parties gaining ground across Europe.

Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen on Monday gave the leader of the party, Herbert Kickl, the chance to form a coalition after attempts by other parties to forge a governing alliance without the far right collapsed. On Saturday, Karl Nehammer, chancellor since late 2021, said he would resign.

The Freedom Party has participated in governments but only as a junior partner. It finished first in a general election last year but since no party won a majority, two or more will need to link up to form a government.

"I may have certain wishes, but respect for the voters requires that I accept this majority," Van der Bellen, a progressive, said Monday after meeting with Kickl. "I did not take this step lightly."

The Freedom Party, criticized over pro-Russia stances, anti-Islam and anti-immigrant rhetoric and corruption scandals, won in September with around 29% of the vote. But after Nehammer's center-right People's Party refused to join with the Freedom Party, Van der Bellen gave the mandate to form a government to Nehammer His efforts to join with the center-left Social Democrats and liberal Neos party collapsed last week, and the People's Party signaled it was open for talks with Kickl.

If they fail, a new election is expected. Polls show the Freedom Party at around 36% and the People's Party at 21%.

WORLD NEWS

Canada's Trudeau To Resign

PATRICK DOYLE/REUTERS

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has led minority governments for the past five years.

Continued from Page One
Conservatives, led by Pierre Poilievre, a populist who would be elected prime minister if the election were held now.

"It has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," Trudeau said.

Trudeau is the latest standard-bearer for progressive politics to suffer from a voter backlash, amid economic stagnation in Europe, discontent with aggressive climate policies and a growing resistance to immigration. With Trump set to return to the White House on Jan. 20, conservatives and populist right-wing parties have also made unprecedented gains in the European Union, where three-quarters of governments are either led by a right-of-center party or are ruled by a coalition that includes at least one.

The Canadian leader would exit as one of the most unpopular political figures in the country, leaving his party in a weakened position and his country facing an uncertain economic future. Voters blame Trudeau for rising costs and housing shortages that were aggravated by looser immigration policies. His approval rating fell to about 20%, and the Liberal Party trails the Conservatives by over 20 percentage points.

"In the last couple of years, Trudeau has not been an effective politician," said Bruce Anderson, a longtime pollster, communications strategist and political commentator in Ottawa. "He's kind of lost his political antenna."

On top of Canada's other economic woes, Trump is promising, among other measures, to impose 25% tariffs on Canadian imports unless drugs and migrants stop coming across the northern border. While that threat is seen to be aimed more at Mexico, it still presents a political headache for Canada's leaders.

Trudeau's hold on power grew tenuous in December, after the left-leaning New Democratic Party, which had been propping up his minority government, said it was withdrawing its support.

That setback came days after the resignation of the finance minister, Chrystia Freeland, his deputy and trusted ally. She said she left the cabinet because she thought Trudeau wasn't taking adequate steps to prepare for a possible trade war with Washington.

Freeland is now seen as a top contender to succeed Trudeau, along with Mark Carney, the former Bank of England and Bank of Canada governor. He also moved to suspend the current session of Parliament until March 24, to avoid facing a no-confidence vote that would trigger a snap election while the party is still searching for a new leader.

Trudeau's luster began to fade in 2019, four years after taking office, after his former justice minister accused him of interfering in a corruption investigation into Montreal engineering company, SNC-Lavalin Group. The country's ethics watchdog ruled that actions by Trudeau and his aides were "tantamount to political direction." Trudeau accepted responsibility for what unfolded, although he said he disagreed with some of the watchdog's findings.

Pictures then emerged of Trudeau in brown makeup and wearing blackface at separate parties, undermining his reputation for inclusivity.

He never regained his standing, leading minority governments for the past five years.

Capitalizing on Trudeau's misfortune has been Poilievre, 45, who has pulled from the same playbook that has animated right-wing populists in the U.S., Argentina, and across Europe. Poilievre has promised to lower taxes, including cutting an unpopular carbon tax, restrain government spending and cut red tape to accelerate home construction. He has blamed Trudeau's relatively loose fiscal policy for fueling higher prices.

Poilievre also channeled Canadian anger at Trudeau's Covid-era policies and sided with the Freedom Convoy trucker protests, which shut central Ottawa and parts of the border with the U.S.

Trudeau's government used emergency powers to quell the protests, which further inflamed anger toward his government, and added weight to Poilievre's argument that Trudeau was guilty of flouting people's freedoms.

The sharp rise in postpandemic prices, combined with the aggressive interest-rate increases required to tame inflation, was a double whammy for Canadian households, which on a per capita basis are among the most indebted in the developed world. Pollsters said it was a miscalculation for Trudeau government to press ahead with carbon tax increases when people were struggling with high prices.

"There was a delay in understanding the pain points for Canadians," said Shachi Kurl, president of the Angus Reid Institute, a polling firm.

She added Trudeau had fallen victim to voter fatigue, after almost 10 years in power and three election campaigns. Only four Canadian prime ministers—among them Trudeau's father, Pierre—have won more than three elections.

Trudeau said he spent the holiday break weighing his future, and on Sunday night revealed his decision over dinner with his family.

On Monday, Trudeau tried to recall the spirit of his first days as leader. "I've always been a fighter," he said, but acknowledged that his presence on the ticket might have been too much for Canadian voters. "It's time for a reset," he said.

Watch a Video

Scan this code to watch a video on Justin Trudeau's plans to step down.

German Inflation Tops ECB Target, Giving Pause to Policymakers

By Ed Frankl

Inflation in Germany rose further above the European Central Bank's target in December, potentially complicating policymakers' decisions about whether, or by how much, to cut interest rates in the coming months.

Consumer prices were 2.6% higher in December than the same month of 2023, up from a 2.2% rise in November, marking a third-straight month of rising inflation, statistics agency Destatis said Monday. It also was higher than expectations of 2.4% from economists polled by The Wall Street Journal.

The upward surprise to inflation in Europe's largest economy could give ECB decision makers pause ahead of its next meeting on Jan. 30. Core inflation, a measure of underlying inflation that excludes volatile energy and food prices, crept up to 3.1% in December, as services inflation ticked higher.

The rise in inflation comes at a difficult time for the German economy. Growth is sluggish, hampered by long-term weakness in the country's traditionally key manufacturing sector, with the prospect of layoffs at major firms in the coming months.

Meanwhile, political paralysis amid bickering in the incumbent coalition government led to snap elections set for February. U.S. import tariffs promised by President-elect Donald Trump also threaten to hurt German exports.

"With headline inflation accelerating and economic sentiment remaining weak, the specter of stagflation is back, at least in the short run," ING's Global Head of Macro Carsten Brzeski said in a note.

Sticky inflation could remain in the new year after a sharp rise in car-insurance premiums at the start of 2025, alongside increased public-transport prices and modestly rising gas prices.

However, the ECB is likely to overlook the inflation resurgence in December and cut rates at the next meeting, judging that its key deposit rate is still too restrictive for the current weak state of the eurozone economy, he added.

A weakening labor market—which has come into focus after layoffs recently announced at companies such as Bosch and Thyssenkrupp—likely will prompt slower wage growth, helping to cool inflation later this year. But while Germany's Bundesbank in December said inflation would track lower in 2025, it only expects a slight fall because of a temporary steeper rise in food prices, and slowly abating price pressures affecting services. Annual food inflation climbed to 2.0% in December, from 1.8% in the prior month.

On an EU-harmonized basis, which the ECB uses to judge against its 2% target, German inflation was 2.9% in December, and 2.5% on average in 2024, Destatis said. The Bundesbank expects 2025 inflation to average at 2.4%.

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WORLD WATCH

SACHIN KUMAR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

RIDING HIGH: Sikh warriors mark the anniversary of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh at a celebration Monday in Patna, India.

CHINA

Quake Rocks Tibet; At Least 32 Dead

A strong earthquake shook a mountainous region in western China near Nepal on Tuesday, killing at least 32 people. The official Xinhua News Agency said 38 others were injured, citing the regional disaster relief headquarters.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude-7.1 quake was centered in the Tibet region at a depth of about 6 miles. China recorded the magnitude as 6.8. The epicenter was located where the India and Eurasia plates clash and cause uplifts in the Himalayan Mountains strong enough to change the heights of some of the world's tallest peaks.

In Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, the quake sent residents running out of their homes.

—Associated Press

WEST BANK

Three Israelis Killed In Bus Shooting

Gunmen fired on a bus carrying Israelis in the occupied West Bank on Monday, killing three and wounding seven.

Violence has surged in the West Bank since Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, attack ignited war in Gaza. Palestinians have carried out scores of shooting, stabbing and car-ramming attacks against Israelis. Israel has launched military raids that frequently trigger gunbattles with militants. There has also been a rise in attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers.

Monday's attack occurred in the Palestinian village of Al-Funduq. Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said two women in their 60s and a man in his 40s were killed, and the military said it was looking for the attackers.

—Associated Press

FRANCE

Sarkozy Tried Over Gadhafi Allegations

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy went on trial Monday over the alleged illegal financing of his 2007 campaign by the government of then-Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. Sarkozy, 69, president from 2007 to 2012, has denied any wrongdoing.

The Libyan case is the biggest and possibly most shocking of several scandals involving Sarkozy, who faces charges of passive corruption, illegal campaign financing, concealment of embezzlement of public funds and criminal association, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

The trial involves 11 other defendants.

Sarkozy is looking forward to the hearings "with determination," his lawyer said.

—Associated Press

UKRAINE

Russia Claims Hold On Strategic Town

Russian troops in eastern Ukraine have captured the stronghold of Kurakhove after a monthslong battle, Russia's Defense Ministry claimed Monday, adding the wrecked town to the Kremlin's list of conquests during the almost three-year war.

But the Ukrainian force defending Kurakhove dismissed the claim while acknowledging that Russian forces were attacking urban areas.

Russia's claim came a day after its Defense Ministry said Ukrainian forces had pressed new attacks in Russia's Kursk border region.

Kurakhove has been a stronghold for the Ukrainian army on the eastern front line in the partially occupied Donetsk region.

—Associated Press

China Ship Cuts Internet Cable Near Taiwan

By Joyu Wang

TAIPEI—A Chinese-owned vessel cut an undersea fiber-optic cable near Taiwan, Taiwanese authorities said, causing only minimal disruption of service but sending a message about the vulnerability of the island and its internet.

It was the latest episode of apparent sabotage—including the cutting of data cables beneath the Baltic Sea—that have called attention to the security of what is viewed as critical infrastructure across the world.

China is engaged in a long-running, multifaceted pressure campaign to influence the people and leadership of Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy on an island claimed by Beijing.

At the same time, Taiwan is working to ensure that it has adequately secured internet service to keep the island online in the event of an invasion or blockade by China.

On Friday, the Hong Kong-owned, Cameroon-flagged cargo vessel was found cutting one of about a dozen undersea communications cables connecting Taiwan to other countries in the region, Taiwanese authorities said. Seven crew members on board were Chinese nationals, authorities said.

At around 7:51 a.m., a disruption warning about a subsea cable near Taiwan's Keelung Harbor was sent to Chunghwa Telecom, the Taiwanese government-run telecommunications operator. Internet service was largely unaffected, the company said.

Chunghwa said it suspected the outage was caused by a vessel dragging the cable, which lies on the seabed. Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office didn't respond to a request for comment.

Around midday, the Taiwanese Coast Guard dispatched a unit to track down the suspected vessel. The maritime law-enforcement agency said the officers couldn't board the vessel for inspection because of weather conditions but that it had collected radar data and navigation records that it would send to prosecutors for further investigation.

The vessel, identified by the Taiwanese Coast Guard as the Shunxing 39, continued to the South Korean port city of Busan, the maritime agency said, adding that it has notified Seoul about the case.

The Taiwanese Coast Guard said the ship was also registered in Tanzania and appeared to operate under two sets of Automatic Identification System equipment, a transmission tracking device that provides a ship's type, name and coordinates in real time.

"While its intentions remain unclear, it couldn't be ruled out the possibility of a Chinese provisional vessel conducting gray zone harassment," the Coast Guard said, referring to China's pressure tactics. Such tactics range from military drills that simulate a blockade of the island to cyberattacks and social-media campaigns, Taiwan authorities say.

It is unlikely that cable-cutting incidents aren't intentional, said Herming Chiueh, deputy head of Taiwan's digital ministry, in a recent interview.

The ship involved in Friday's incident had been sailing in waters near Taiwan in the past two weeks, a Taiwanese security official said. The official described it as suspicious that a Chinese-owned ship was registered in a way that obscured its origin.

—Bojan Pancevski and Daniel Michaels contributed to this article.

Surviving Deadliest Plane Crashes Takes Luck

By Jo Craven McGinty And Timothy W. Martin

When **Jeju Air** Flight 2216 crash-landed at a South Korean airport, skidded into an embankment beyond the runway and burst into flames, it seemed impossible that any of its 181 occupants could have survived.

Miraculously, two did—but how?

Investigators assessing the survivability of a plane crash focus on five factors: integrity of the aircraft, effectiveness of safety restraints, G-forces experienced by passengers and crew, the environment inside the aircraft and postcrash factors such as fire or smoke.

The two flight attendants who survived the **Boeing** 737-800 crash on Dec. 29 were seated in the very back of the plane, which was the only recognizable part of the aircraft left intact.

They are on a very short list among aviation's worst disasters. Over the past eight decades of commercial travel, there have been just 17 other crashes where planes carrying 80 or more occupants left a sole survivor or two, according to data collected by the Flight Safety Foundation, an international nonprofit that provides safety guidance.

The Jeju Air flight attendants, a 33-year-old man and a 25-year-old woman who remain hospitalized in Seoul, sat in rear jump seats a few steps from where the jet's tail snapped apart. Both are conscious and communicative, their doctors have said.

YONHAP/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

Two flight attendants were the Jeju Air crash's sole survivors.

The man suffered bone fractures largely on the left side of his body and is wearing a brace to limit his neck movement because of spine injuries. The woman fractured her right ankle and possibly sustained other injuries on her right side. She recalled hearing a loud bang, then smoke billowing from the plane.

"There are a lot of reasons someone may survive in what appears to be a totally unsurvivable situation," said Barbara Dunn, president of the International Society of Air Safety Investigators. "Depending on how the aircraft lands and where a passenger is seated has an impact. If you have your seat belt tightened, it limits the amount of flailing the body goes through. It also depends on whether a passenger is able to assume a brace position."

Days before the Jeju Air accident, as many as 29 people survived the crash of an Azerbaijan Airlines flight that killed 38 people in western Kazakhstan. The preliminary conclusions of an Azerbaijani probe said the plane had been hit by Russian air-defense missiles. The crew battled for more than an hour to maintain constant speed and altitude before it crashed, The Wall Street Journal reported.

All surviving passengers were seated in the rear of the **Azerbaijan Airlines** plane.

The relative safety of where occupants are seated during a crash varies, and one of the biggest factors is how the aircraft touches down.

"A lot of people think it's safer in the back than in the front," Dunn said. "Not necessarily. How quick the fire takes over and how quick you can get to an exit, all those things matter as well."

The National Transportation Safety Board deems a crash "survivable" if the forces transmitted to occupants don't exceed the limits of human tolerance and the structure of the aircraft surrounding the occupants remains largely intact. A crash is deemed nonsurvivable when the G-forces are so great, the body can't withstand the punishment.

G-forces are the gravitational forces that keep humans grounded on earth. In daily life, humans are subjected to 1 G. A roller coaster or a rapidly accelerating electric car can create two or three times that force.

In general, a human will lose consciousness at 4 G's or 5 G's—although they have survived greater forces, said Lonnie G. Petersen, a professor of aeronautics and astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The effect depends on the number of G's and the direction and duration of the force.

If an aircraft such as the Boeing 737 that crashed in South Korea sustains no more than 9 G's in forward motion, occupants have a reasonable chance of escaping serious injury, according to University of North Dakota professors Thomas Zeidlik and Nicholas Wilson, who referenced federal airworthiness standards.

"The occupants will most likely survive with bumps and bruises," said Zeidlik, who researches aerospace physiology. "Crumple zones, much like cars, are built into modern airplanes to help with this, as well as air bags, seat belts and other devices."

The NTSB survivability definitions don't take into consideration the effect of hazards such as smoke or fire, nor do they hinge on whether there are, in fact, survivors in a crash.

"When you hear survivable, you'd think people survived, and when you hear non-survivable, you'd think everybody dies," said Anthony T. Brickhouse, an expert in aerospace safety and a professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. "We've had people survive what we would call nonsurvivable crashes, and we've also had people die in what we would call survivable crashes."

On Monday, South Korea extended the closure of Muan International Airport, where the Jeju Air crash occurred, by another week to Jan. 14. Authorities over the weekend completed a roughly two-hour transcription of the cockpit voice recorder file, though haven't committed to releasing it publicly. Key focuses of the joint U.S.-South Korean probe are why the plane made a belly landing without its landing gear, as well as if the location of the concrete-reinforced embankment met international standards.

Air-safety experts have called the crash puzzling.

—Benjamin Katz and Soobin Kim contributed to this article.

Pentagon Flags More Chinese Companies

By James T. Areddy

The Pentagon on Monday added a number of well-known Chinese businesses to a list of companies it identifies as military in nature, including some of the country's largest internet, battery, science and shipping firms.

The additions to the Defense Department's list of "Chinese military companies" reflects its assessment that China fuses commercial and military technology. Beijing aims "to strengthen all [China's] instruments of national power by melding aspects of its economic, military, and social governance," as the Pentagon put it in a threat assessment published last month. The report cited efforts to harness advanced artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology and integrated circuits for military means.

Among the new names on the list of more than 50 business groups plus subsidiaries are shipping and port industry giants China Overseas Shipping—or Cosco—Sinotrans & CSC Holdings, and China International Marine Containers; airplane producer Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China, or Comac; battery maker Contemporary Amperex Technology, or CATL; telecommunications modular maker Quectel Wireless Solutions; facial-recognition business SenseTime Group; and WeChat owner Tencent Holdings.

Tencent's U.S.-listed shares dropped almost 8% Monday after the list was published.

A spokesman for Tencent said its inclusion "is clearly a mistake. We are not a military company or supplier. Unlike sanctions or export controls, this listing has no impact on our business. We will nonetheless work with the Department of Defense to address any misunderstanding." The other companies didn't respond to requests for comment.

North Korea Balks at Diplomacy With New Missile Test

By Timothy W. Martin And Dasl Yoon

SEOUL—North Korea carried out its first missile test since Donald Trump's election victory, a sign Pyongyang appears to be in no rush to curtail its illicit activities and pivot back to diplomacy despite a turnover in U.S. administration.

The Monday launch of an intermediate-range missile ended a nearly two-month absence of North Korean weapons tests—the most-recent activity having come hours before Americans took to the polls on Nov. 5.

With the president-elect's inauguration two weeks away, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declined opportunities to show Trump and the U.S. he has peace talks on his mind. Rather, he has opted for contempt, if not aggression.

A return of Trump—the first and only sitting U.S. president to meet a North Korean leader—offers Kim an opportunity for dealmaking that he can't let slip away, although it is now a question of when and how, said Sungmin Cho, a political-science professor at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul. In the buildup to potential talks, Kim's hand looks stronger to the U.S. and Trump, by demonstrating how North Korea's weapons tests can occur with relative impunity.

A significant reason for Kim's bravado is a tighter bond with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two leaders in June signed a mutual defense pact. North Korea has provided munitions, missiles and soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine. Meanwhile, Moscow has given diplomatic cover at the United Nations, upticks in cross-border trade and other military support.

The two countries' military ties could deepen even more, with Russia showing a willingness to provide North Korea with advanced space and satellite technology in return for the Kim regime's war assistance, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at a Monday press conference in Seoul.

Monday's launch occurred around noon local time, with the missile flying around 680 miles before splashing into the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, said Seoul and Tokyo officials.

WORLD NEWS

Dissidents in Venezuela Plot Return in Bid to Deter Maduro

By Kejal Vyas And Juan Forero

BOGOTÁ, Colombia—Venezuela's popular opposition leader plans a return to the public stage after months in hiding from the secret police—a last-ditch attempt to stop President Nicolás Maduro from clinging to power when his term ends this week.

In a video interview with The Wall Street Journal from an undisclosed location in Venezuela, María Corina Machado called on supporters to join her on the streets to protest Maduro's plan to begin a third presidential term on Friday despite his huge loss in last summer's election. Maduro's regime launched a brutal crackdown on opposition figures and protests in the wake of his election defeat.

Edmundo González, who stood in for Machado when the regime barred her from running for president and was forced into exile after the result, met with President Biden at the White House on Monday. After the meeting, he thanked the Biden administration "for its support in this struggle for the democratic recovery of Venezuela. It's a commitment we carry with us."

Biden, in a post on X, called González "a man whose campaign inspired millions and one who should be taking the oath of office in four days."

Venezuela has suffered an economic implosion, diplomatic isolation and a civilian exodus during Maduro's 12-year rule. He has cemented the country's position as a haven for drug traffickers, U.S. officials say, and given Russia and China a sturdier foothold in the Western Hemisphere.

"If Maduro remains, prepare yourself because we will see three, four or five million Venezuelans crossing the border," Machado, a conservative, said on Sunday.

She called on supporters to defy the threat of arrest and "go out with their families, with their children, with their grandparents," to denounce the authoritarian president's move. But, with the military still under Maduro's control, there is little evidence that Venezuelans will heed the call.

Troops have largely shut dissent after violently quashing protests following the July 28 vote. Government officials in Caracas didn't respond to requests for comment.

The military's counterintelligence unit said in recent days it would deploy some 1,200 armed troops to quell protests. They are led by National Guard Col. Alexander Granko, who is under U.S. sanctions for alleged human-rights abuses. Police have set up roadblocks around the capital.

From hiding, where Machado says she has been alone for months, the 57-year-old has conducted a covert campaign to rally support for Venezuela's political opposition via video calls with people from foreign leaders and diplomats to activists and supporters, she says.

After the elections, Machado's party collected voter tallies showing González defeated Maduro in a landslide.

The regime didn't provide evidence that it had won but embarked on a campaign of repression, targeting the opposition. González, a 75-year-old former diplomat, initially fled to exile in Spain and is now rallying support in the Americas. He met with Argentine President Javier Milei on Saturday in Buenos Aires.

At the international airport outside Caracas, the government has distributed fliers featuring González's face, offering $100,000 for information leading to his arrest.

Over the past five months, the regime has jailed more than 2,200 people, mainly dissidents, maintained the military's loyalty and tasked the Supreme Court, stacked with Maduro's handpicked allies, with resolving the election impasse, which it did in his favor.

"Anyone who had an important responsibility in the movement and in the success of the July 28 victory is either exiled, hiding or imprisoned," Machado said, adding that the security forces have visited her elderly mother and the relatives of other activists. "In my case, Maduro says I'm a terrorist who'd fled justice, that I should spend my life in jail."

—Alexander Ward contributed to this article.

CRISTIAN HERNANDEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

María Corina Machado led anti-Maduro protests in August.

FROM PAGE ONE

Concerns Over Stress In Military

Continued from Page One

or resorted to violent outbursts. The New Year's Day events are raising new questions about the government's efforts to help service members and veterans and its ability to detect the warning signs.

While authorities initially looked for a connection between the episodes, they appear to have "no definitive link," according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation—and they reflect two different challenges.

Jabbar, a 42-year-old consultant retired from the Army, crashed a rented pickup truck into a crowd of revelers in New Orleans, killing 14 and injuring dozens more. In recent months, Jabbar had secretly been embracing Islamic State propaganda that inspired him to commit mass murder. Police recovered an ISIS flag from his truck, as well as social-media videos filmed in the hours before the attack in which Jabbar declared his allegiance to the terrorist group.

More than 1,500 miles away, Livelsberger, a 37-year-old Green Beret on leave, shot himself in the head and detonated the car full of firework mortars and camp fuel canisters outside the Trump International Hotel in Las Vegas. The explosion injured seven bystanders.

Livelsberger intended the act as a "wake-up call" for the country, which he said was "headed towards collapse," according to notes on his phone shared by police.

"Fellow Servicemembers, Veterans, and all Americans, TIME TO WAKE UP!" he wrote on a note recovered by police. "We are being led by weak and feckless leadership who only serve to enrich themselves."

Emails sent before his death—including claims about Chinese and American drones being powered by antigravity technology, and that he was being "followed"—suggest that Livelsberger was suffering from a mental-health episode and paranoia.

Veterans' struggles

In the aftermath of the events, some veterans say they deplore the violence and yet see their own struggles reflected by these men, understanding how unresolved anger or mental-health struggles from military service can compound everyday stress.

"Transitioning out of the service is probably one of the most challenging things an individual could do," said retired Army Lt. Col. Sam Andrews, who is on the board of directors for Bravo Zulu House, a transitional living facility for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. "We lose our sense of purpose, we lose our sense of tribe, we lose our sense of meaning."

Adam Ramsey, a U.S. Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, said some military members fear disapproval and being assigned lesser duties for needing therapy. "I watched it happen to several people," he said, adding that he was lucky to have good leadership that supported his PTSD diagnosis and treatment.

FROM TOP: SHAWN FINK/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK; 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 82ND AIRBORNE

Above, a vigil in New Orleans on Jan. 4, three days after Shamsud-Din Jabbar, who was retired from the Army, crashed a pickup truck into a crowd of revelers. Below, Jabbar in November 2013 during his service in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Ramsey said he was quick to anger after serving. He wasn't getting along with his wife and unrealistically expected his 5-year-old child to be more mature. He had flashbacks of firefights, including one that resulted in the killing of a child soldier in Afghanistan, and he said he felt like a monster.

"I didn't realize it was even happening—it had become part of my personality," he said. Eventually, his wife had had enough, he said. "She sat me down, and basically said, 'Look, you're not who I married,'" said Ramsey, 35, who served 10 years in the Army.

Desmond Cook, who joined the Marines three days after his high-school graduation and served various tours in war zones, said he felt like he'd lost his identity and the only career he'd known after retiring from the Marines in 2008. "What do I do? I only knew how to do one thing. I knew how to blow stuff up, and I knew how to kill people," he said.

Cook said he struggled during his service with what he now realizes was PTSD. He was short-tempered and looked for a reason to fight. The thought of being in a firefight in a war zone excited him. Large crowds made him angry. He tried to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol to feel normal.

He recalled a moment in Afghanistan when flashbacks of the faces of people he saw killed drove him to tears—but waited until he was alone to cry.

"I was in charge, so I didn't want to look weak," he said, choking back tears thinking back. He got help for PTSD after retiring, but not before nearly taking his own life on more than one occasion.

While Livelsberger's friends said they saw signs of his declining mental health, the Army said in a statement that "he did not display any concerning behaviors at the time." Livelsberger had earned a Bronze Star with valor and never had any disciplinary issues, Army officials said. But he told friends he had suffered several concussions, affecting his memory.

Livelsberger also seemed haunted by what he had witnessed during his deployments, and in the last days of his life sought to call attention to what he said were "war crimes." He reached out to several veterans with prominent social-media platforms or podcasts, saying he wanted to blow the whistle on a 2019 U.S. strike in Afghanistan that killed at least 30 civilians.

A U.N. report described the U.S. strike in Nimruz province, which was targeting a drug facility, as unlawful. In his message, Livelsberger said he conducted targeting for over 60 buildings "that killed hundreds of civilians in a single day."

"I needed to cleanse my mind of the brothers I've lost," he wrote, "and relieve myself of the burden of the lives I took."

Lone wolves

The Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs have yet to find a way to consistently foresee the collapse of the fragile balance of many who served—carrying seen and unseen scars of war and longing for a community similar to the military. The lure of conspiracies or extremist ideologies can appeal to troops and veterans who miss a sense of purpose.

When it comes to terrorism, officials say the main threat is "lone wolf" actors who are often inspired by extremist rhetoric and self-radicalize online to carry out sudden acts of violence.

Jabbar posted at least five videos propagating the ideology of ISIS, which he claimed to have joined last year, according to Christopher Raia, the deputy assistant director of the FBI's counterterrorism division. "A lot of questions we are still asking ourselves," he said at a press conference on Thursday. "That's the stuff that in the coming days, as far as that path to radicalization, that we're really going to be digging into and make it a priority."

While serving in the military doesn't make someone more likely to embrace violent extremist beliefs than the general public, those who do have the potential to carry out more devastating acts of violence, analysts say.

According to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, or Start, almost 16% of extremists who have committed criminal offenses in the U.S. since 1990 had military backgrounds.

Those with military backgrounds who are radicalized "are more likely to attempt and successfully commit mass casualty attacks, defined as four or more victims, than extremists without similar military training or expertise," said Michael Jensen, who leads a team tracking military radicalization at Start.

Attacks by either active duty soldiers or veterans represent a minuscule fraction of those who serve. According to a 2023 Pew Research Center report, there are roughly 18 million veterans in the U.S. and another two million currently in uniform. According to an October investigation by the Associated Press, 480 people with a military background have been accused of crimes associated with extremist views from 2017 through 2023, including more than 230 arrested after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

"One reason veterans may struggle is the loss of comrades and structure when they leave the military, which terror groups can provide. That may explain motivation. The search for meaning and cohesion," said Todd Helmus, a senior behavioral scientist at Rand. "Those who join are drawn by martial ambitions, which terror groups can also provide an outlet for."

According to Start, 42.1% of veterans who commit violent crimes do so 15 years or more after serving. The group's analysis of U.S. extremists with military backgrounds who committed criminal acts from 1990 to 2024 found that more than 80% were inspired by white nationalist or antigovernment extremism. Just under 7% were motivated by jihadist ideologies.

Pushback

The U.S. military has long worked to battle extremism within the ranks. The nation's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan led to new warnings within the military about a growing radicalization threat.

In 2009, Army Maj. Nidal Hasan's shooting rampage that killed 12 people on Fort Hood cemented those fears.

Three years later, troops were found to be part of a plot to kill then-President Obama and in 2019, prosecutors charged a Coast Guard officer and self-described white nationalist of plotting to kill U.S. politicians.

Coming into office in the aftermath of Jan. 6, 2021, President Biden vowed that his administration would tackle domestic extremism. His defense secretary, Lloyd Austin, announced initiatives to counter domestic extremist groups that tend to recruit among U.S. military service members and veterans.

But the Biden administration's efforts to screen service members for ties to extremist groups or potential indications of radicalization to violent action encountered strong pushback from Republican lawmakers, who lambasted them as politically motivated.

Punishing someone for espousing potentially extremist ideologies is like "threading a very fine needle when we're engaging in prohibiting conduct that may be protected by the First Amendment," a Pentagon official told reporters in 2021 when briefing the task force findings.

In recent years, Republican lawmakers have deleted language that would have made violent extremism a crime in the military code of justice from the Defense Department's annual policy bill. They also introduced a bill to "prohibit the use of appropriated funds to investigate extremism in the military" and eliminated funding for the Pentagon's Countering Extremism Working Group.

President-elect Donald Trump's nominee to head the Pentagon, Fox News personality and U.S. Army veteran Pete Hegseth, partly rose to prominence by waging a crusade against efforts to weed out extremism in the military, which he called politically motivated. He also has said the role of U.S. service members in the Jan. 6, 2021 attacks on the Capitol have been overstated.

RONDA CHURCHILL/REUTERS

Emergency vehicles are parked near the Trump hotel in Las Vegas on Jan. 1.

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Resolutions Failing? Try Winter Arc for Flexible Steps

Use the early months of the year to launch lasting change in your fitness and beyond

By Nicole Blades

After "Auld Lang Syne," early January's most popular song might be called: "New Year, New Me." We sing it to make resolutions and recommitments, especially to fitness—*hit the gym, get in shape, drop some weight*. Unfortunately for many, the new fitness momentum stalls out by February.

Some people have found their fix using a method called the Winter Arc.

The Winter Arc has no stringent rules, unlike many other viral fitness trends. No mandates on the number of workouts you must do, no diets to follow or other boxes to check. Instead, the approach offers general guidelines that are accessible and flexible, its proponents say. All it asks is that you be realistic, track your progress and, most important, start small.

It kicked off in September, when Tiktoker Carly Berges, a self-development influencer based in Miami, posted a video laying out her plans to use the last quarter of the year to lock in. Berges vowed to get hyper-focused on her health and fitness goals during the colder, dark-by-4:30 p.m. part of the year, when many people are slowing down, slacking off and sinking into the couch.

She called this her Winter Arc. By sticking to a consistent sleep-wake schedule, workout plan and healthier diet beginning Oct. 1, she got a running start on personal development plans for the New Year. With 4.7 million views since the video's original posting, others have shown themselves to be up for the challenge, too.

It's not too late to start the Winter Arc now. Here's how.

Start small

Kylie Larson, a certified women's health and fitness coach and the founder of Elemental Coaching based in Arvada, Colo., suggests starting on your Winter Arc by making small changes.

"With the Winter Arc, the focus is on your behavior, not the outcome," she says.

You have more control over your day-to-day choices and specific habits than trying to achieve a broad goal, Larson says. Adding more daily steps to boost your weekly total is easier than the blanket goal of losing 15 pounds in a month.

"Your behaviors are the steps you need to take to reach the end goal," she says.

It's about a mindset shift, says Dr. Pamela M. Peeke, a physician specializing in lifestyle medicine and women's health based in Rockville, Md.

"Rather than viewing the Winter Arc as a temporary fad or strict, short-term challenge, think of it as a catalyst for positive, long-term lifestyle changes," she says.

This slow-and-steady approach to building new, healthy habits reduces the likelihood of burnout—physical and mental exhaustion from overexercise, or taking things to the extreme with dieting, Peeke says.

About 30% of Americans made New Year's resolutions, with 79% of them pertaining to improving physical health, according to a January 2024 Pew Research Center survey. Less than a month into the new year, 41% hadn't kept at least some of their pledges.

▶ Edith Essandoh has been happy with how the Winter Arc has affected her fitness routine.

FROM TOP: SEAN DONG FOR WSJ; EDITH ESSANDOH

Leave space for grace

Edith Essandoh says her New Year's resolution since she was 12 has been to spend more time at the gym. The 19-year-old University of Pittsburgh sophomore started the Winter Arc in November.

She says she has been consistent with daily workouts at the gym and worked her way up to regularly putting in a full hour on the StairMaster. She credits the Winter Arc's adaptability for a large part of her success.

She'd been put off by the strict guidelines of other fitness challenges, where she felt more pressure to follow specific instructions to the letter.

And if you don't? "Then you've failed at fitness," she says.

If your goal is to work out four times a week, the Winter Arc allows for flexibility in what that might look like, says Femi Betiku, a physical therapist and a certified Pilates instructor based in Westchester County, N.Y.

"You can switch things up," he says. "One day the workout is a brisk 20-minute walk or an easy jog. The next could be a 30-minute mat Pilates class or a strenuous 45-minute strength-training session." You're still checking those workout boxes each week.

It's this space left for calling an audible that makes the Winter Arc more compatible with real life. You feel like you're being set up for success, Essandoh says: "Being able to make your own schedule and give yourself grace is so important when you're trying to build a better you."

It's not a mark of failure if you need to change or stop doing something that is not working for you, proponents say.

"You might need to reduce the number of behavior changes you're focusing on, seek out an accountability partner or remove something in your environment to improve your chances of success," says Larson, the Colorado fitness coach. "Show yourself some understanding and make adjustments as needed."

A 2023 study from social scientists at Caltech shows that, in general, it takes about six months for a new gym habit to form.

"Sometimes, with these types of trends, people think once they're done with it they don't have to do anything else again," Betiku says.

It's more helpful to think of the three-month Winter Arc challenge as "a starter pack for building more healthy habits for the long haul," he says. The hope is that the gym habit sticks and your progress keeps going.

"You're making little changes, collecting small wins, and creating a positive snowball effect."

MY RIDE | BY A.J. BAIME

Old-World Classic Has Brooklyn Home

Keith Helmetag, 71, a co-founder of C&G Partners, a multispecialty design studio, on his 1969 Alfa Romeo Spider "Duetto," as told to A.J. Baime.

▲ Keith Helmetag and his 1969 Alfa Romeo Spider 'Duetto' at Brooklyn's Gowanus Canal; he uses the surfboard in other waters.

I first started driving when I was 15, in 1968, right when there were a number of great sports cars on the road. The Alfa Romeo "Duetto," as it is nicknamed, comes from that era, and is most known from its appearance in the film "The Graduate."

I have lived in Brooklyn for 26 years, longer than I have lived anywhere else, and, for 21 of those years, I have driven this Alfa Romeo. One of the allures is the connection it gives me to where I live.

New York is a city of immigrants. This car was first imported into America from Italy in the '60s in three colors—the colors of the Italian flag: red, white and green, like my car.

I have been an avid surfer since I was 11 years old, and this car fits my surfboard. I can be at Rockaway Beach in 40 minutes, and I have driven hundreds of times to the beaches of New Jersey and Long Island. Or, I drive to the Palisades in 20 minutes and go hiking. I drive it around the neighborhood where I live, near the Gowanus Canal. I drive to the places where you will see the work I have done in my career, such as Yankee Stadium, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and the 9/11 Memorial & Museum.

I drive the car wearing a New York Mets hat. The vintage license plate is the same colors as the hat. And as any good New Yorker knows, 1969 was the year the "Miracle Mets" won the World Series.

The car sits at the nexus of people who live and work in Brooklyn, who come from all over the world. I maintain the car at a shop that was started by Sicilians, but now is run by an Israeli. I park it in a local garage run by a guy from Gambia. I am having it restored at a shop run by a Jamaican proprietor. They all make up the fabric of this community.

But I also love this car as a design object. This car was designed by Battista Farina, founder of the Pininfarina studio, and a designer responsible for many Ferraris and Alfa Romeos.

He was one of the greatest industrial designers of all time. This was the last car he designed before his death. When I was growing up, our first family sports car was a Chevrolet Corvair, and Pininfarina had a hand in the design of that car, too.

When I look at this car, I can see the designer sculpting the shape out of clay—the lines that run along the side, and the rounded configuration of the front and back fenders. While the car was originally built with what is commonly known as Alfa Romeo's 1,750 cubic-centimeter motor, the previous owner upgraded it with a 2,000-cc engine.

I like to say that design is what makes me motor, and this car is my connection to the city I love.

◀ The Alfa Romeo has a four-cylinder engine. This Alfa Romeo model appeared in the movie 'The Graduate.'

EDWARD POMYKAJ FOR WSJ (3)

If You Want to Buy a House, First Figure Out Hidden Costs

Besides the mortgage, count on having money for taxes, insurance, maintenance and more

JON KRAUSE

By Joe Pinsker

You saved for the down payment and worked the mortgage bill into your monthly budget. But what about all those other costs that come with owning a home?

Homeowner's insurance, routine maintenance, property taxes and utilities have all been getting more expensive lately.

Those expenses added up to an average of $1,180 a month, according to a report in June 2023 from the real-estate firm Zillow and the home-improvement tech company Thumbtack. The monthly mortgage payment for a typical home, assuming a 20% down payment, was $1,770.

"People think that once they are over that hump of making that big purchase, that the rest of it is just smooth sailing," says Noah Damsky, the founder of Marina Wealth Advisors in Los Angeles. "In reality, it's just the start of the costs."

The burden of these nonmortgage extras can come as a surprise to first-time buyers and can be the difference between a happy homeowner and an unhappy one. Here's how to run the numbers.

> New owners can get blindsided by the cost of insurance or big repair bills.

Home insurance

Many buyers don't figure out the price of insuring a house until after they have committed to buying it. That can be a mistake.

"Get actual quotes for some of the properties you are looking at so that you're not blindsided," says Eric Tyson, a financial adviser and co-author of "Home Buying for Dummies."

Buyers can ballpark the annual cost of insurance at 0.5% of a home's value.

But financial advisers recommend getting more specific than that, especially if you're shopping in an area prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes or wildfires. The cost of $1,000 of coverage in some of those areas is more than three times the national average, according to Intercontinental Exchange. The premium you pay will also grow over the years alongside inflation, just like other costs outside of your home loan.

Maintenance

Routine home maintenance comes to an average of about $500 a month, according to Zillow and Thumbtack's 2023 report. That included services such as appliance repairs, carpet cleaning and lawn care.

Bigger repairs, such as a new roof or water heater, can cost much more—and be a surprise. You might get a good idea of what will need replacing soon from a pre-purchase home inspection.

Damsky recommends setting aside 1% of the home's value annually to cover those big costs. He says to update that figure each year based on the value estimates on real-estate websites, to account for inflation in maintenance and repair costs.

Association fees

These are disclosed in real-estate listings. They can be hundreds of dollars a year or thousands a month, and some have been rising faster than overall inflation. They often cover shared upkeep and amenities in a condo building or neighborhood.

Associations can issue special assessments to collect money from members for big one-off expenditures.

Though they may be unforeseen, prospective buyers might be able to get a sense of what's coming from the association's meeting minutes and financial statements.

Property taxes

Property taxes typically amount to roughly 1% of the value of a home each year, but vary across states and cities.

Tax bills rise as the home's value appreciates, though occasional reassessments of property values can cause increases to come in big bursts.

Depending on the timing, someone who buys in the summer might find their tax bill is higher the following January.

Tax rates might also tick up after a local election if voters approve a new spending proposal, says Daryl Fairweather, chief economist at real-estate firm Redfin. They could drop if a city starts generating more of its tax revenue from commercial properties.

Utilities

Homeowners spend an average of about $3,000 a year on energy, including electricity and natural gas, according to Intercontinental Exchange. Their average water bills are nearly $1,000 a year.

To get around the imprecision of estimating utility bills, ask the seller or a neighbor what they pay.

After you move in

Fairweather adds that a detailed projection of homeownership costs should also account for the indirect effects of buying. For example, you might spend more on gas because of a longer commute, or you might be moving to a place where auto insurance costs are higher.

A down payment and closing costs may drain most of your savings, but it's important to keep a cash cushion.

"When you buy that house," Damsky says, "the next day the furnace might blow, and there you go—you need five, 10 grand."

Taxidermist With an A-list Roster

Continued from Page One

ferent facets of art and sculpture to give life to an animal," said Burtka. "I wouldn't even call her a taxidermist in the way people think of it—not in a middle-America-stuffed-deer-head way. It's so involved. She puts so much care into it."

If you're an A-lister with a penchant for decorative dead animals, chances are you know about Maykut. The 43-year-old taxidermist has sold butterflies to Drew Barrymore, an antler mount to Nick Jonas and a jackalope to Courtney Love. Her squirrels have added a measure of realism to the Saks Fifth Avenue windows. Her birds decorate the NoMad Hotel in Manhattan.

Maykut is part of a new wave of taxidermists who don't fit the traditional mold. Their interests are varied: reverence for animals, devotion to the fine detail work of the labor-intensive craft, a commitment to preservation.

"The pieces she makes are intriguing. They have a seriousness and a sense of humor at the same time," said Adam Jones, guitarist in the rock band Tool who commissioned Maykut to make a four-horned Jacob ram. "There's a cultural influence to her work—it's traditional—but she's also doing her own thing and giving it a modern sensibility."

One day in late October, a studio in rural New Jersey put the range of Maykut's work on display. On the floor were a dozen glass domes, each containing a pinned and mounted butterfly with spread iridescent wings. They were the last of 63 being shipped to Los Angeles for installation in a residential-building lobby. A safari park's worth of beast mounts lined one studio wall. A Himalayan goat, a yearling doe, a white-tailed buck, a ring-necked pheasant and a Corsican ram all perched like sentinels. In the freezer were feeder animals and goat and ram skins, tanned and ready for mounting.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no stuffing in taxidermy. The word itself explains the practice: "taxis" is Greek for arrangement, and "derma" is skin. It is an exacting process that starts with carving an anatomically correct mannequin of urethane foam to custom-fit the animal skin, which is ultimately stretched over the figure.

Wire reinforcements fix a tail or paw in place. Paintbrushes and airbrushes are used for "hair and makeup," as Maykut puts it.

Maykut's career evolved the way many now do—as a series of serendipitous encounters amplified by social media.

Collecting taxidermy inspired her to start tinkering in the craft. She set up shop in a windowless room in her Brooklyn apartment. When she downsized to move in with her then-boyfriend, she held a stoop sale and word started getting out.

She appeared in an episode of "Oddities" on the Discovery Channel. Her table at a popular Brooklyn flea market became a destination for curio hunters and landed her on the cover of a local paper.

In 2012, the year she opened her first studio, Brooklyn Taxidermy, Maykut presented filmmaker John Waters with a taxidermy mouse at his Christmas show in Tarrytown, N.Y. An Instagram post with her, Waters and the mouse went viral. Social media took over from there.

▲ Amber Maykut's early love of antique taxidermy inspired her to start tinkering in the craft, developing a modern sensibility and humor that won over clients and social media.

◀ The 43-year-old prepares a foam mannequin for a taxidermy piece in her New York studio.

BRYAN ANSELM FOR WSJ (2)

Taxidermy in the U.S. was a $1 billion industry in 2024, according to market-research group Ibis World. It grew 0.8% a year on average between 2019 and 2024. Despite a drop last year, Ibis World forecasts it will grow over the next five years.

Maykut is among a new crop of young urban practitioners—some with ties to the fashion or design worlds. On any given day, she might communicate with a zookeeper, a museum collection manager, a celebrity and a window designer at a department store. She's on occasion dealt with a New York City exterminator in possession of a wild raccoon. In New York, catch-and-release of pests is illegal. Invasive animals that are caught must be destroyed.

Maykut, who recently moved her business to Chester, N.Y., says no animal is killed so her business can profit. She works, for instance, with animal remains from butchers, along with cockatiels, parakeets, hamsters and chickens once kept as pets. Cats and dogs are out of the question.

She has been hunting once.

Maykut grew up in Hawthorne, N.J. She wasn't an outdoorsy child. In her early 20s, she started collecting antique taxidermy, and her interest grew from there. A corgi owner, she sees taxidermy as a way to honor animals.

Maykut said taxidermy is a dying art that needs new blood to continue to broaden its reach. She said the pursuit is full of contradictions that appeal to different interests: morbid and cute, light and dark, real and fake, blue collar and high end.

"It's complicated and provocative, and people feel so differently about it," she said. "That's what makes art. It's a skill set. It can be in museums, but it's also roadkill. But maybe that's all art—you have finger paintings, but then you have Picasso and Michelangelo. It's everything, everywhere all at once. There's death and taxes. And taxidermy."

ARTS IN REVIEW

ART REVIEW

Baldwin Lee's Empathetic Eye

A museum highlights the photographer's detailed, compassionate pictures of hardscrabble lives

By William Meyers

New Orleans

In 2022, Hunter's Point Press, a small publisher of books of art, poetry, art history and architecture, published "Baldwin Lee," a monograph of work the eponymous photographer had taken of black life in the American South 40 years before. The book was immediately acclaimed a classic, sold out, and is now in its third printing. The heretofore little-known Mr. Lee has since had prints exhibited in prestigious galleries and museums. In 2023, when his work was shown at the David Hill Gallery in London, he told an interviewer from the Guardian who asked about his choice of subject matter, "It stunned me that my fellow Americans had to live like this." The Ogden Museum of Southern Art has 47 of Mr. Lee's black-and-white prints on display through Feb. 16, in "Baldwin Lee," an exhibition organized by Richard McCabe, the museum's curator of photography. The pictures take us back to a markedly different time.

Mr. Lee, a Chinese-American, was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1951, grew up in Manhattan's Chinatown, and went to MIT. There he came under the influence of the spiritually inclined photographer Minor White, and determined to make a career in the arts. He studied with Walker Evans in the MFA program at Yale and, in 1982, set up the photography program at the University of Tennessee. During summer vacations he traveled the South with his tripod and a 4-by-5-inch Wista view camera, asking black people in small communities mired in extreme poverty if he could take their pictures. The large-format negatives account for the great detail in his work.

The two girls in "Savannah, Georgia" (1984) may be sisters; the one on the right looks straight at us, and the one on the left looks at the other. They both hold onto a piece of tubing with their hands entwined. The sharp detail in the 16-by-20 print lets us see that the girl on the right has a lesion of some sort on her chin and another on the side of her right nostril. What does that betoken? Is it something related to poverty? Is she self-conscious about it?

Like the two girls in the preceding picture, the two in "Columbia, South Carolina" (1984) seem to have affection for each other, but here one looks to be an early teen and the other several years younger. It is twilight and they both stand barefoot in the road. The older girl has her left arm draped on the younger one's shoulder and holds a pencil in her right hand. The younger has her arms crossed over her chest and stands with her right foot on her left. They face the camera with equanimity while two other children hang out around a tree in the dim background.

Lee captures the struggle and spirit of black communities in the South.

"Valdosta, Georgia" (1985) is one of two 40-by-50 pictures. A man, age 60 or so, stands with his back against the porch of a building with unpainted wooden siding. He is looking at the camera as carefully as it is looking at him. The man wears a brimmed hat, a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up and, most conspicuously, a pistol in a holster. What is his reason for the pistol? No clue. He is wearing a tie with a stickpin, and the large-format print lets us see there are small holes in the tie; moths? One of the pleasures of Mr. Lee's pictures is that they raise as many questions as they answer.

For instance, in "Monroe, Louisiana" (1985), what does the woman in mesh stockings and high-heeled boots, sitting on a bar stool and blowing an air-kiss at the photographer, do for a living? Is it sex work? Behind her, a bearded man sits at a small round table with a can of beer on it; he holds a cigarette in his right hand and stares intently at the woman. In "Vicksburg, Mississippi" (1984) two young boys play in a jumble of huge letters evidently taken from signs. One boy nestles in the crook of an "N" bigger than he is; the other stands behind an "H" and an upside-down overturned "F." The shirtless man in another picture titled "Monroe, Louisiana" (1985) sits on the front steps of a house holding the hands of the two young children on either side of him; two other children sit behind. The affection is palpable.

In the late 1950s, at the University of Pennsylvania, I took a course in the philosophy of the social sciences. The teacher was William Fontaine, the first black professor in the philosophy department. One of the questions the course dealt with was whether it was possible for people from one culture to fully understand people from another; the answers in the assigned texts were, if I remember correctly, yes, no and maybe. Mr. Lee's deeply empathetic photographs incline me to believe that, yes, it is possible to overcome our social categorizations and treat with others soul to soul. It is a blessing.

'Monroe, Louisiana' (1985), left, and 'Bessemer, Alabama' (1987), above.

OGDEN MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN ART (2)

Baldwin Lee
Ogden Museum of Southern Art, through Feb. 16

Mr. Meyers writes on photography for the Journal. See his photographs at williammeyersphotography.com.

ARTS CALENDAR

HAPPENINGS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 7

By WSJ Arts in Review Staff

Film

"The Last Showgirl"
(Jan. 10)

Pamela Anderson stars as a veteran showgirl who faces an uncertain future after the Las Vegas production she has long performed in suddenly closes. Gia Coppola directs this drama that expands into wide-release this week and also stars Jamie Lee Curtis, Dave Bautista, Brenda Song and Jason Schwartzman.

▲ Pamela Anderson in 'The Last Showgirl.'

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Diane Warren: Relentless"
(Jan. 10)

The songwriter who has crafted hits for superstars like Cher, Celine Dion and Aerosmith gets the documentary treatment in the new film from Beth Kargman ("First Position"), which includes interviews with musical icons and Warren collaborators like Jennifer Hudson, Gloria Estefan, Common and LeAnn Rimes.

TV

"Shifting Gears"
(ABC, Jan. 8)

Tim Allen returns to the sitcom world as the owner of a car restoration shop whose estranged daughter (Kat Dennings) moves in with him along with her teenage kids.

"American Primeval"
(Netflix, Jan. 9)

People struggle against the wilderness and each other in this period drama set in 1857 on the Western frontier. Written by Mark L. Smith ("The Revenant"), the six-episode series is directed by Peter Berg and stars Taylor Kitsch and Betty Gilpin.

"Hollywood Squares"
(CBS, Jan. 9)

Classic game-show reboots continue apace with the latest offering being the comedic tic-tac-toe program originally hosted by Peter Marshall. Nate Burleson takes over his duties and Drew Barrymore sits in the coveted central square once occupied by Paul Lynde.

"On Call"
(Prime Video, Jan. 9)

Superproducer Dick Wolf is back with a new police procedural, this one based in Southern California and featuring a cinéma-vérité twist that mixes regular recording styles with dashcam, bodycam and cellphone footage. Eriq la Salle, Lori Loughlin, Troian Bellisario and Brandon Larracuente star.

Music

Ringo Starr, "Look Up"
(Jan. 10)

The Beatles drummer has had a lengthy solo career—some 20 studio albums—since the band's breakup, and he adds to that catalog with a new country-music LP produced by T Bone Burnett and featuring Billy Strings, Alison Krauss and others.

Opera

Prototype
(Various locations, New York, Jan. 9-19)

The annual opera, music and performing-arts festival that presents contemporary and avant-garde works from rising stars returns. This year's offerings include the world premiere of "Eat the Document," an opera about a Vietnam protester; "Black Lodge," a "goth industrial rock opera" based on the writings of William S. Burroughs; and "Telekinetik," a streaming "hip-hopera" about a vigilante tortured by a telepathic shaman.

Art

"Picturing Nature: The Stuart Collection of 18th- and 19th-Century British Landscapes and Beyond"
(The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Jan. 12-July 6)

More than 70 works in a variety of media explore how the genre of landscape art evolved during a transformative period of British history. Thomas Gainsborough, John Robert Cozens, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner are included in a show that traces the emergence of the genre and its rise to a respected form against the backdrop of the nation's tectonic shifts in politics, economics and global power.

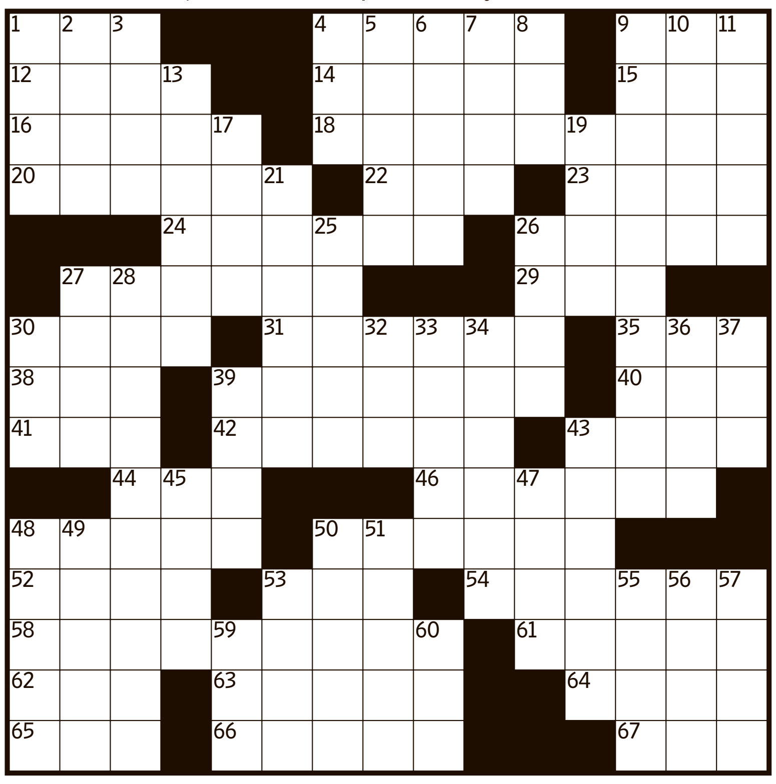
Last Call

"What It Becomes"
(Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, through Jan. 12)

A small exhibition aims to recast our conception of the most straightforward creative act: drawing. Our critic said several of the artists on view provide "an often intriguing peek beyond more staid definitions of the form."

For additional Arts Calendar listings visit wsj.com. Write to brian.kelly@wsj.com.

The WSJ Daily Crossword | Edited by Mike Shenk



RECIPE FOR DISASTER | By Gary Larson & Amy Ensz

Across

1 Any ship
4 Designer brand
9 Everyday article
12 Modern-day "carpe diem"
14 Be crazy about
15 50 Cent piece
16 Bigwig
18 Tsunami approaching the Shire?
20 Need for a charger
22 Extra periods, on ESPN
23 Put on the payroll
24 Product debut
26 Targets of Babinski reflex tests
27 Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel painting, e.g.
29 Technician's spot
30 Saloon choices
31 Attack by plane
35 Burner setting
38 Signing tool
39 Hurricane hitting a coffee plantation?
40 Org. with a famous journal
41 Dearie
42 Drawers
43 Biz bigwig
44 Big follower of California?
46 Shylock
48 Airheaded
50 Confirm
52 To be, to Baudelaire
53 Distress signal
54 Sever
58 Earthquake affecting a carnival?
61 Just the same
62 Antlered animal
63 Mell Lazarus comic strip
64 Pivot around
65 Deli loaf
66 Sports stunner
67 "Kama Sutra" topic

Down

1 Coordinate, as phone and laptop settings
2 Frost
3 Dresden's river
4 ___ Vegas
5 Kind of committee
6 Diner seating option
7 Makes a mistake
8 Tennis do-over
9 Forest fire engulfing a hiking path?
10 Le ___ (port in Normandy)
11 Fencing equipment
13 Lots
17 Leaning
19 "Hold your horses!"
21 University of Arizona setting
25 Eminent
26 Knocked off, so to speak
27 Beat it
28 Lightning bolt blasting a Broadway musical?
30 PC program
32 Stat for Sosa
33 Alaska native
34 Dig find
36 General Bradley
37 One of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse
39 Peer group, of a sort
43 Burial chambers
45 Manual reader
47 Freaky fliers
48 Put off
49 European boot
50 Goes from place to place
51 Help desk sign
53 Woodworking site
55 Palette paints
56 Smoke duct
57 Bend an elbow, say
59 The Mustangs' sch.
60 "Dig in!"

Previous Puzzle's Solution

A	L	A	N	■	T	W	I	N	■	P	R	E	S	S
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B	I	N	D	■	B	A	T	I	K	■	I	B	E	T
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SPORTS

MITCHELL LEFF/GETTY IMAGES; JOE SARGENT/GETTY IMAGES

Saquon Barkley, top, finished with 2,005 rushing yards. Joe Burrow, below, missed the playoffs.

The NFL's Hottest New Offense Is the Oldest Trick in the Book

Heading into the playoffs, old-school smash-mouth football saw a dramatic resurgence this season—taking advantage of shifts that emphasize defending against the passing game

By Andrew Beaton

Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley earned himself a comfortable perch for his team's final game of the season: the bench.

After rushing for 2,005 yards, Barkley had already led his team to an NFC East title heading into Week 18. The only reason for him to step on the field against the New York Giants, the team that drafted him and let him get away in free agency, would have been to chase the 101 yards he needed to break Eric Dickerson's single-season rushing record.

As more time has passed since Dickerson set that mark for the Los Angeles Rams back in 1984, the more unreachable it looked. Offenses increasingly built their schemes around passing, not running the ball. At the same time, the NFL has mostly abandoned the idea of a single bellcow running back who absorbs the brunt of the load.

All of those trends should make Barkley's historic season even more of an anomaly. But it turns out his stellar performance this season was actually a sign of the exact opposite: This was the year that old-school, smashmouth football made a comeback.

With the playoffs set to begin next weekend, teams are rushing for 7.0 more yards per game than in 2023, the biggest single-season leap in 41 years. And it's all a result of—and a reaction to—modern shifts in the way the game is played.

Defenses, which are now focused primarily on limiting explosive pass plays, are ceding more ground near the line of scrimmage and stationing their safeties deeper down the field. A new generation of mobile quarterbacks have added to the rushing output across the league. And it's become impossible to look at this year's playoff picture without seeing how dominant rushers are paving the way for their teams.

It's why Barkley was perfectly happy to spend his Sunday gearing up for a Super Bowl run instead of trying to chase down Dickerson.

"I didn't come here and sign here just to rush for 2,000 or break a record," he said. "I want to do something special."

While Barkley was the NFL's most productive back in 2024, Philadelphia was far from the only team that was rewarded for investing in the position this offseason. Of the 14 playoff teams, six were led in rushing by veteran acquisitions.

Despite hitting what is supposed to be the downslope of their careers, many of these backs posted their most effective campaigns in years. Derrick Henry, who joined the 2,000-yard club back in 2020 with the Titans, nearly got there again when he plowed ahead for 1,921 yards and a league-high 16 touchdowns at the age of 31 for the Ravens. Aaron Jones, at 30 years old, ran for career-high yardage with the Vikings. The Packers hardly missed him, though, thanks to an explosive season from free-agent signing Josh Jacobs.

What explains the success of these backs are defenses that have grown ripe for them to exploit. A league analysis earlier this year found that teams were placing two safeties deep on 63% of snaps, versus 44% in 2019, in order to counter downfield passing attacks. As part of this strategic shift, there have been fewer players lining up near the line of scrimmage.

Simultaneously, rushing offenses have been buoyed by passers who create plays with their legs more than ever. Entering Week 18, quarterbacks were averaging 16.3 rushing yards per game—the highest total on record.

That can also have the effect of opening up rushing lanes for their teammates in the backfield. Just ask Barkley and Henry who joined teams with mobile quarterbacks—Jalen Hurts and Lamar Jackson, respectively—and flourished.

Now, they're headed to the postseason and old-school football wisdom says that when temperatures get lower and the stakes get higher the run game only grows in importance. This year, these teams are ready—because they have spent all season preparing.

The Data: Joe Burrow's Excellent Season—Individually

The final wild-card slot in the AFC was one of only two playoff spots still up for grabs entering Week 18. The Cincinnati Bengals did their part when they beat the Steelers on Saturday, but they were ultimately shut out by the Broncos, who beat the Chiefs on Sunday.

That outcome also put Cincinnati quarterback Joe Burrow in rare company. Burrow had a brilliant season. His 4,918 yards led the league. With 43 touchdown passes, he posted just the 21st season in NFL history that exceeded 40 passing scores. But when a quarterback enjoys such a prolific year, it usually means his team is among the best in the league.

While the Bengals finished 9-8, the 20 other seasons where a quarterback had 40-plus touchdowns saw their teams win 74% of their games.

One way to understand how Cincinnati's defense let Burrow down: NFL teams won 122 of the 139 games, or 87.8% of the time, when they scored 30-plus points this season. When the Bengals did so, they went 4-4.

The Debate: Another Season for Rodgers?

If Sunday was Aaron Rodgers's final game in the NFL, he at least ended the season on a high note. Rodgers tossed four touchdowns, including the 500th of his career, as the Jets beat the Dolphins.

Rodgers has talked about possibly calling it quits after this year. But he also showed Sunday that even at 41 years old, he might still have something left—especially in a league that figures to be desperate for quarterbacks this offseason.

That leaves a host of questions: Does he want to play again? Do the Jets want him back? Or will he wind up playing somewhere else in 2025?

JASON GAY

I'm Still Not Sure Anyone Can Beat Kansas City

I'm going to get to the NFL in a moment, but as I write this column Sunday night, my delighted children are skipping around the house, as their schools have declared a snow day. Keep in mind: *Not a flake of snow has fallen from the sky*, there's merely *a forecast of incoming snow*, and yet school officials are increasingly conscientious about weather safety, and also eager to suck up to the all-powerful sled industry.

Back in my time, of course, the school superintendent made this decision by letting his trusty old Labrador retriever out the back door in the morning. If he could see the poor dog's head poking out of the snow drifts, school remained in session. If he saw no dog at all—or simply the dog's tail, pivoting back and forth, like a shark cruising the shallows? School was closed.

But I digress. On to the NFL.

I'm glad this regular season is over. A couple of years ago, the NFL expanded the schedule to 17 games, but it's starting to feel like 70.

I've watched too much bad football. I've watched too much Aaron Rodgers. I'm tired of games splattered all over the calendar, tired of two games on Monday nights, tired of Christmas football. It's high time for all those crummy teams to go home, learn how to garden, play terrible golf, and stop bothering the rest of us.

You know who you are, crummy teams. My eyeballs are relieved. Farewell.

Tanking: Fair or Foul?

One of those crummy teams, the New England Patriots, has already relieved its head coach. Jerod Mayo's out, after a single season in relief of Grumpy Lobster Boat Captain Bill Belichick, who endured for 24, six of which came with complimentary Super Bowl rings. Pats owner Robert Kraft didn't wait long to announce Mayo's dismissal after New England's season-ending win over Buffalo.

Excuse me, did you say season-ending win? Yes. New England wound up winning a game it was supposed to lose, which in the NFL is a sin worse than losing a game you're supposed to win. It's considered an especially egregious blunder because New England needed only to lose to clinch the league's worst record and the No. 1 pick in the upcoming college entry draft.

Even though New England appears to have landed a franchise quarterback—rookie Drake Maye has been impressive—a No. 1 pick is a coveted asset and trade bait, and would have put New England in a fabulous position heading into another offseason.

Instead, Mayo's Patriots had the audacity to triumph, behind third-string quarterback Joe Milton III, who honestly played better than two-thirds of the NFL QBs I've watched this season. Milton, a sixth-round pick out of Tennessee, completed 22 of 29 passes for 241 yards, a touchdown, and ran for another. Honestly, good for Milton. I loved watching him shine—wouldn't you try to do the same, given the first and possibly only major shot of your NFL career?

CHARLES LECLAIRE/REUTERS

Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce celebrate after a win on Christmas.

Can Anyone Stop the Chiefs?

Like a lot of folks, I spent most of the season wondering if the Kansas City Chiefs would ever slip. It finally happened on Sunday, as the league-leading Chiefs, top seed assured, playing for zippo, started backup Carson Wentz and rolled over to Denver, 38-0, whoopee-doo, who cares.

I'm not falling for that trick. Kansas City, defending back-to-back Super Bowl champions pursuing an unprecedented "three-peat," remain the best team in football until someone proves otherwise. They may have won a lot of close games they probably shouldn't have won; they may have endured a lot of injuries; they may have persevered despite a modest (by his Hall of Fame standards) statistical season by star quarterback Patrick Mahomes, but K.C. has home field through the playoffs, and we've seen this movie before, many times.

I actually think it's reached the point the Chiefs are starting to be a little underrated. You can feel the buzz ramping up around Baltimore, Buffalo, Philadelphia and Detroit, as Andy Reid's outfit is getting treated like an old copy of *U.S. News & World Report* at the dentist's office. Phooey to that. I enjoy reading an old copy of *U.S. News & World Report* at the dentist's office when I can find one, and I want no part of Mahomes's craftiness in January or February. If you told me Mahomes was still feeling the effects of his annual high ankle sprain, I'd want to see him even less. He remains the standard, until toppled. Chiefs, same.

MVP Debate: Josh or Lamar?

Bills quarterback Josh Allen remains the favorite to win the MVP. I don't vote in these affairs—it just feels like there's enough topspin on the idea that this is Allen's year to win, that Buffalo assembled a fabulous season and the multitalented Allen was the force who made it happen. I wish I had a bucket of fish to start tossing at the TV anytime a sports talking head uses the term "*narrative*," but the narrative around Allen as MVP has had genuine momentum for several weeks. And he's a great player who had a great year, no doubt.

But I also think Baltimore's Lamar Jackson had the best regular season by an NFL quarterback in 2024, and I don't think it's close. Jackson (41 touchdown passes, four interceptions, 915 rushing yards, league-best passer rating and QBR) had a historic year, a better statistical accumulation than Allen in nearly all categories, and outplayed Allen head-to-head in September.

The other "strike" against Lamar is that his team is more talented than Buffalo. Jackson has associates like running back Derrick Henry and (currently injured) Pro Bowl receiver Zay Flowers, and isn't relied upon to be a one-man show in the way Allen is.

That's a terrific argument—if you covered your eyes with duct tape and didn't watch a single Ravens game this season. Because even a casual review would reveal that Jackson is the most electric playmaker in the sport. It's also true that the Ravens played in a far rougher division (AFC North) than the meatball AFC East.

It's OK. This is how this stuff goes. Allen's a deserving candidate, and would be a solid MVP, but I don't think even he'd argue he's better at doing this than Jackson (and both of them would probably pick Mahomes if they needed to win one game.).

On that front, Allen and Jackson have much to prove in the playoffs, where success has eluded them both. Either man would trade the MVP paperweight for a Super Bowl ring. How about that for an NFL narrative? Bring me my bucket of fish.

OPINION

Netanyahu's Gift to Joe Biden

MAIN STREET
By William McGurn

The greatest gift from Benjamin Netanyahu to Joe Biden was making the departing American president's Middle East legacy seem much better than it is. And he did it by ignoring Mr. Biden's advice.

It started with Mr. Netanyahu's sending ground forces into Gaza to defeat Hamas, which carried out the Oct. 7, 2023, terror attack on Israel. Later he sent the Israel Defense Forces into Rafah, on the border with Egypt—the key to Hamas's weapons supply. He then pivoted to Hezbollah in Lebanon, which had started shooting at Israel on Oct. 8. Along the way Israel killed terrorist leaders in Tehran, Damascus and Beirut. Most recently, Israel has been fighting the Houthis, another Iranian proxy that operates from Yemen and has also been battling the U.S. Navy.

Israel's leader ensured a better legacy for the U.S. president by ignoring his advice.

Mr. Biden opposed almost all these actions. Even so, he benefits from the Middle East that is beginning to emerge from Mr. Netanyahu's decisions. Hamas has been devastated. So has Hezbollah. The Assad regime in Syria is no more, with the Israelis destroying most of Syria's strategic-weapons stockpiles lest they fall into the hands of radical jihadists linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State.

We know Mr. Biden understands the gift that was handed to him—because he's now trying to take credit for it. He's doing so even though Mr. Netanyahu's victories would never have come had he heeded Mr. Biden's advice.

"Netanyahu became a figure of hate for the left everywhere," says Elliott Abrams, who served as President Trump's special representative for Iran. "Partly this was for being on the right and never apologizing for it, and partly for being a tough nationalist when the left here and in Europe had decided nationalism was passé, even evil.

"But it was also partly for demonstrating that, yes, there are military solutions and not everything can be solved or best solved by our Blinkens at a negotiating table."

For Israel there was a price: accusations of genocide. Urban warfare is ugly. When innocents are killed it's heart-rending. But just-war theory holds that a force that hides behind protected institutions such as hospitals and schools bears the moral blame for turning them into military targets. Almost no one lecturing the Israelis has explained how you defeat terrorists who, as part of their war strategy, callously use civilians as human shields.

Yet Mr. Netanyahu's strategy of destroying the Iranian proxies making war on Israel has gone a long way toward defanging Iran. Yes, Iran launched missiles at Israel, but the attack looked almost half-hearted. Israel's retaliation left Iran's air defenses in tatters.

JIM WATSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Netanyahu shakes hands with Biden.

All this happened because Mr. Netanyahu was willing to do what he thought Israel needed to do. He acted in defiance of the received wisdom of the diplomatic community, the international campaign to declare Israel guilty of war crimes, and most of the recommendations from the Biden White House.

Some on Team Biden now admit the obvious. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the New York Times: "Whenever there has been public daylight between the United States and Israel, and the perception that pressure was growing on Israel, we've seen it: Hamas has pulled back from agreeing to a cease-fire and the release of hostages."

The result of Mr. Netanyahu's war policy is a Middle East that is much more hopeful on Mr. Biden's way out than it was on his way in. The weakening of Iran, the crippling of Hamas and Hezbollah, and Iran's loss of its client state in Syria have upset the status quo for the better.

So what happens now? Come Jan. 20, President Biden will be out. Going forward, the Iranians and Israelis will have to deal with Mr. Trump.

The outstanding issue remains Iran's nuclear-weapons ambitions. The Iranians have talked about how soon they could have a bomb, and if they get one it would certainly limit what the world can do in response to Tehran's aggressions. With or without talks, the Iranians have every incentive to double down on that bet. The irony is that Mr. Netanyahu's military success has also removed the main reason not to go after Tehran's nuclear program: the fear of escalation and the difficulty of the operation. Iran now lacks air defenses to stop an attack and the conventional or proxy forces to respond effectively.

The further irony is that if Mr. Trump succeeds in the Middle East, Mr. Biden will continue to take credit. It won't be as hard as it might appear, because he has spoken from both sides of his mouth. Shortly after the Oct. 7 attacks, Mr. Biden traveled to Israel and delivered a strong speech on support for the Jewish state as it defended itself. He then spent much of the rest of his presidency criticizing Israel every time it did.

Whatever Messrs. Trump and Netanyahu choose, they will know they've hit on the right policy when Mr. Biden again takes credit for it.

Write to mcgurn@wsj.com.

Nations Prepare for a Post-European World

GLOBAL VIEW
By Walter Russell Mead

As Donald Trump prepares his triumphant return to the White House, American allies in Europe are waking up to a disagreeable reality. In Mr. Trump's second term, the U.S. is going to be more powerful relative to its core allies than at any time in decades—and Mr. Trump's second term is going to be even more disruptive and confrontational than his first.

Sadly, with the exception of the U.S., much of the West is sunk in decline. A generation of poor performance in the European Union and Japan means that America's traditional partners bring less and less to the table each year. Japan seems to be undergoing an awakening. But many of our most important European allies are contending with three decades of economic, political and strategic failure.

Economically, our European partners and friends are failing the test of the digital age, generating neither the new technologies nor companies that the 21st-century demands. Their embrace of ruinous climate policies reduces their competitiveness. Their NIMBYism throttles growth, and their unsustainable welfare states further diminish their prospects.

Politically, our friends haven't succeeded in making the EU great. Individual European states are too small to have much effect on global events, and when they try to act together, they punch below their weight. The EU bureaucracy moves too slowly and often with too many reservations and compromises to maintain Europe's place among leading global actors. Meanwhile, partially as a result of a massive failure to manage migration policy and its consequences, the political establishment in country after country is losing ground to radical movements, sometimes on the left but more often on the right.

Strategically, the failure is even more dramatic. Europe is more vulnerable to Middle East disorder, Russian aggression and predatory Chinese economic policies than the U.S. is, but its responses to these and other challenges are as inept as they are insufficient. Even as waves of refugees from an exploding Middle East and North Africa triggered political and social crises across Europe, European diplomacy has remained essentially irrelevant in the region.

Europe has been passive in the face of Houthi interference with Red Sea commerce. Russia has kicked France out of Africa. Almost three years into Russia's war in Ukraine, Europe still feeds Vladimir Putin's war machine by buying Russian energy. Europe's poorly conceived green policies have positioned China to destroy the automobile industry, a pillar of Europe's economy and social stability.

As a result, Europe needs the U.S. more than ever but is less well situated to influence American policy—or to help the U.S. meet our many global challenges—than at any time in decades. This is why the leaders of once-great European powers tremble at every tweet from Mar-a-Lago and why Mr. Trump's second term holds more challenges for Europe than his first.

Trump recognizes that the Continent has abdicated its role in history.

For Europeans, the shift from Team Biden's largely uncritical support will be painful. "Germany is my country's closest and most important of allies," President Biden told German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in October. For Team Biden, getting along with Germany was the foundation of smart foreign policy. That the Germans have been consistently and gravely wrong about Russia, China, Iran, climate, migration, the importance of strong defense and the condition of their own economy never seems to have registered with an American president whose worldview comes out of the 1970s and 1980s.

Under the circumstances, it's easy to understand the schadenfreude with which much of MAGA World regards a weakened and demoralized Europe. The contempt with which Germany and the European establishment generally rejected President Trump's correct and important criticisms of misguided European foreign and domestic policies still rankles.

But no matter how satisfying, settling scores isn't how you make America great again. European decline isn't good for the U.S. With the axis of revisionists on the prowl, Team Trump will need all the help it can get, and America's goal must be to resuscitate Europe rather than to dance on its grave.

Europe has abdicated its role in history. The coming administration must work with partners like Japan that have the strategic clarity that so many Europeans lack. Countries like Israel, India, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have read the signs of the times more accurately than our European friends. Argentina's awakening from the fever dream of Peronism creates important opportunities in the Western Hemisphere. Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand matter more than most European states to the future of American foreign policy.

Mr. Biden's words to Mr. Scholz were sincere and heartfelt. But Europe is no longer the center of America's foreign-policy universe, and barring a near-miraculous European recovery, future presidents will likely follow Mr. Trump's lead in shaping their policies for the new post-Western world.

The Case for Subsidizing Electric Vehicles

By Fred Krupp

Honda and Nissan recently announced plans to merge by 2026. Unthinkable 10 years ago, the merger is intended to keep the companies competitive as the automobile industry makes a transition to electric vehicles. Failure to do so spells doom in today's car market. Foreign EV manufacturers have created an "existential crisis" for Germany's once-mighty domestic industry.

China recently became the world's leading car exporter, thanks to heavy investment in EVs. The U.S. is also making great strides in this growing market, but some American politicians want to wave the white flag. Although a combination of private-sector innovation and support from Congress has driven the EV sector's growth in the U.S., lawmakers are floating the possibility of ending consumer and manufacturing tax incentives for manufacturers and parts suppliers. These incentives level the playing field for American businesses in the face of huge public investments from Europe and China. They are necessary to help America compete.

Ending the tax credits would cede global leadership to China.

In the past two years, companies such as Ford and General Motors have announced more than 100,000 new EV-related jobs. Automakers and other companies have built or are building vehicle, battery and parts factories in 160 congressional districts across the country. Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves called the battery plant under construction in his state a "project of record proportions—the single largest payroll commitment in Mississippi's entire history."

Federal manufacturing and consumer tax credits have fostered massive growth all the way up the EV supply chain, from vehicle assembly to critical minerals. The credits have strict eligibility standards, requiring that the majority of critical minerals and battery components come from the U.S. or an ally. Consumers can receive a $7,500 credit for purchasing an EV. The enactment of this credit encouraged Hyundai to fast-track plans for a Georgia factory.

Working together, the supply-side and demand-side credits are fueling the domestic industry. EV sales are growing, with November sales up 13.6% over last year. If Congress eliminates these incentives, booming communities across the country will be devastated. America's ability to build its industry globally requires domestic consumer demand. For the near future, this requires a boost from these policies, as many new industries do. Killing the tax credits will have a domino effect: Plants will close, sales will slow, and American businesses won't be able to compete on the global market.

Congress could cost the U.S. billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs—that's what this transformed industry will soon provide. Protecting the industry is common sense. It saves American families money, invests in local economies, and keeps the country in this economic race. Let's give our businesses a fighting chance to beat the global competition.

Mr. Krupp is president of the Environmental Defense Fund.

BOOKSHELF | By Brendan Simms

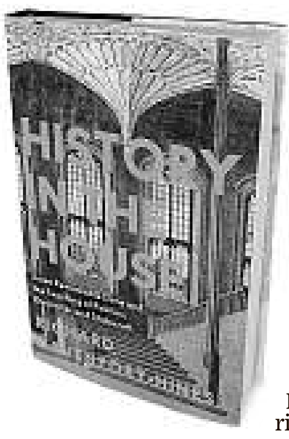
Oxford Revisited

History in the House

By Richard Davenport-Hines
William Collins, 432 pages, $32

It is impossible not to be impressed by Christ Church, the grandest of all of the Oxford colleges. There is its signature bell tower ("Tom Tower," as it is called), designed by Christopher Wren in the 17th century. A visitor to the college's dining hall will be immediately struck by the portraits—as I was when I arrived as a lowly research fellow 30 years ago. The alumni of the House, as the college is known to its members, include no fewer than 13 prime ministers, among them William Gladstone, Lord Salisbury and Anthony Eden. Even today, the aura of Christ Church gives it a prominence in British public life. When the dean and the college's fellows—confusingly called "students"—quarreled a couple of years ago, the charges and countercharges were treated as headline news.

"History in the House" is not a chronicle of the House per se but a study of history at the college in the first part of the 20th century. Richard Davenport-Hines, a distinguished historian himself, describes a realm of inspirational teaching and scholarly pursuit. Along the way, he draws vivid portraits of some of the dons, touching on their work and tracking their friendships and rivalries. It is not exactly a vanished realm, but its customs and traditions may seem quaint to anyone familiar with many of today's universities.



History, particularly modern history, was the dominant subject at Christ Church in this period. A few of the senior historians were leaders in their fields, such as Hugh Trevor-Roper, for many years the Regius professor of history (a prestigious position then effectively appointed by the government). Trevor-Roper was a polymath whose interests ranged from Reformation Europe to Hitler's bunker. Another notable figure was Robert Blake, an expert on the history of the Conservative Party and a biographer of Benjamin Disraeli. By contrast, Arthur Hassall, who wrote about the European balance of power and much else, was more concerned to educate the nation's future leaders and foster "cultured gentlemanliness," Mr. Davenport-Hines says, than to throw himself into serious research.

The bulk of the teaching came in the form not of university lectures but of tutorials organized by the college. These were supposed to be an hour long, though durations varied. They usually involved a single undergraduate discussing with his tutor an essay he had written. The medium was not instruction but conversation. J.C. Masterman, a tutor in modern history at Christ Church and, as it happens, a major figure in Britain's counterespionage efforts during World War II, once said: "It's the weekly talk and discussion between pupil and tutor which is the essence of Oxford life." Samuel Eliot Morison, the eminent Harvard historian, spent three years as a student at Christ Church in the early 1920s. He later remembered "the soft and sheltered days" and valued in particular "the conversation and the company of the most humane and intelligent group of people I have ever known."

Roy Harrod, a historian of economic thought who was long the leading authority on John Maynard Keynes, stressed the importance of conversation among the student body. Lectures were all very well, but in his view, as Mr. Davenport-Hines summarizes it, "undergraduates of any intellectual distinction learnt more of permanent value from the talk of their contemporaries." Or as Harrod himself put it: "By its give and take, by the interplay of minds, one may go deeper and further and come nearer to wisdom than by reading the best book in the world."

The bonds among students and teachers could be strong and sustaining. But wherever there is friendship, enmity is not far away. Trevor-Roper, among whose friends was another distinguished Oxford don, the classicist Maurice Bowra, was also a hater. "Who shall we do down now?" he would ask his allies. Lord Hailsham, a Christ Church man who went on to become Britain's Lord Chancellor, conceded that dons are "beasts to one another."

The dons could be beasts to one another, but the atmosphere was one of lively give and take. Conversation was key to the 'interplay of minds.'

Such friction, though unpleasant, can be harmless enough. Less forgivable, perhaps, was the treatment sometimes meted out to non-European undergraduates. Mr. Davenport-Hines describes the case of a future prime minister of Sri Lanka, Solomon Bandaranaike, who arrived at the House in 1919 and was ignored and belittled on account of his race, or so he felt.

It is fair to say that most Christ Church dons at this time leaned toward the tenets of the Conservative Party, but the college was also a home to Liberals, such as Roy Harrod, and even to Labour Party supporters, such as Patrick Gordon Walker, who was later briefly foreign secretary. The result was what we would call viewpoint diversity, a quality that is exceedingly rare in American history departments today and in some British ones as well.

The purpose of "reading history" at Christ Church, Mr. Davenport-Hines argues, was in part to cultivate statesmen and political leaders, people who would oversee "prudence in the management of change." Sometimes prudence was lacking. Anthony Eden, for example, had to resign over the invasion of Egypt in 1956. Generally, though, Christ Church men served their country well as it navigated two world wars, the establishment of the welfare state and the long process of decolonization.

Mr. Davenport-Hines takes a rather elegiac tone toward the end, lamenting the past several decades as a "sad time" of over-specialization and prizes for all. It is true that academic life is different today and that the traditional history degree has been supplanted by what is called PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics), the subject read by three of the past six British prime ministers. But the teaching at Christ Church—at Oxford generally—continues to be of very high quality. As important, Oxford historians remain a politically and intellectually diverse group, many of whom are vigorous defenders of free speech.

There are many reasons why political and cultural life in early-20th-century Britain was more benign than it was in much of the rest of Europe. "History in the House" implicitly makes the case that the way in which history was taught at Christ Church had something to do with it.

Mr. Simms is the author of "Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, From 1453 to the Present."

REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Biden Issues a Sweeping Oil Leasing Ban

Take that, American voters. And that, and that. This seems to be President Biden's message in his final days in office as he ignores the November election verdict on his tenure and doubles down on the policies voters rejected.

He's doubling down on energy policies that Americans rejected.

The latest example is his sweeping order Monday to remove some 625 million acres of offshore waters from oil and gas leasing. "As the climate crisis continues to threaten communities across the country and we are transitioning to a clean energy economy, now is the time to protect these coasts for our children and grandchildren," the President said. Ah, the royal "we."

The reality is that global oil demand is growing, and environmental protection is compatible with energy development.

Mr. Biden is invoking the 1953 Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to remove in effect the entire Atlantic Coast, eastern Gulf of Mexico, the West Coast and Alaska's Northern Bering Sea from future leasing. The law says the President may "from time to time, withdraw from disposition any of the unleased lands of the Outer Continental Shelf."

But Congress's goal was to promote more domestic oil and gas development while preserving a President's discretion over private leasing. Every President since George H.W. Bush has used the law to set aside federal waters for conservation, though their removals were far less expansive than Mr. Biden's. They also included time limits.

Before the 2020 election, Donald Trump removed waters off the south- and mid-Atlantic coasts amid exhortations from Republican politicians in abutting states, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Sen. Rick Scott. Mr. Trump's order was intended partly to provide protection to Republicans in Florida, South Carolina and Georgia who were taking political heat on the issue.

His order lasted from 2022 to 2032, though he said he'd reconsider if Republican lawmakers asked. Mr. Biden's order is intended to handcuff Mr. Trump and other successors by barring "consideration of withdrawn areas for *any future* oil or natural gas leasing for purposes of exploration, development, or production" (our emphasis).

It's legally questionable whether a President can bind his successors in this manner. When Mr. Trump rolled back Barack Obama's withdrawal of some 128 million acres in the Arctic and canyon areas of the Atlantic, climate groups sued. A liberal federal judge ruled that the law didn't expressly let the President undo a predecessor's order.

But Presidents have modified the duration and expanse of previous removal orders, including their own. By granting the President discretion to withdraw waters, Congress also delegated the power to reverse course. It would raise serious constitutional issues if a President can issue a diktat that restricts executives for eternity.

The White House claims the U.S. is producing more than enough oil and gas in areas that have already been developed and the waters being walled off aren't needed. But many long-ago drilled oil fields are getting tapped out, and more areas will need to be developed to support even current U.S. production levels.

Mr. Biden's climate whisperers no doubt understand this, which is why they pressed for a permanent ban. The President is using his final days to spurn voters who spurned his anti-fossil fuels policies.

As another example, consider the Energy Department study last month that sought to lay the basis for a permanent ban on future liquefied natural gas (LNG) export projects.

Shortly after Christmas, Energy also finalized regulation that will force some 40% of new gas-fired tankless water heaters from the market. Americans will have to shell out more for expensive models or buy cheaper electric heaters. The latter is the Biden goal, though Republicans in Congress could reverse the rule under the Congressional Review Act.

They might also be able to use budget reconciliation to override Mr. Biden's leasing restrictions by requiring the Interior Department to open up the areas for leases. But Republicans in the Southeast would have to drop their parochial opposition to drilling off their coasts. Mr. Trump has a mandate to boost U.S. oil and gas development, which would be a terrible thing to waste.

Michael Barr Takes a Welcome Walk

The Federal Reserve's Vice Chair for Supervision said Monday that he'll soon resign, and there was no mourning other than perhaps in the office of Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Michael Barr, a Warren protege, is leaving the job ahead of what might have been a dismissal after President Trump returns to the Oval Office.

"The risk of a dispute over the position could be a distraction from our mission," Mr. Barr said in a statement released by the Fed about his supervisory role. "In the current environment, I've determined that I would be more effective in serving the American people from my role as governor."

Give Mr. Barr credit for anticipating what could have been a legal fight he was likely to lose if Mr. Trump removed him from the supervisory role and he resisted. Mr. Barr will resign on Feb. 28, or earlier if a successor is named. He'll remain a member of the Board of Governors, where his term doesn't expire until 2032.

These columns last month laid out Mr. Barr's regulatory failures, and the Trump economic team has been debating whether to remove him. Mr. Barr missed the rise of duration risk for bank balance sheets as the Fed raised interest rates to quell inflation. He was focused instead on "making the financial system fairer," as he told the Senate in November 2022. The result was the mini-financial panic of March 2023 after the failure of Silicon Valley Bank.

Mr. Trump will have to name a replacement from the seven-person board, and the best candidate is probably Michelle Bowman. Mr. Trump nominated her in 2018 to fill an unexpired term, and she was renominated in 2020. She is the former bank commissioner of Kansas and has wide experience in Washington.

Bank stocks rose on the Barr news, no doubt because investors hope for a regulator who won't be looking over her shoulder for Ms. Warren's approval. Banks that benefit from federal deposit insurance need regulation and high capital standards. But they also need regulators who focus on genuine financial risks and not progressive political agendas.

Canada Needs a New Election

When Justin Trudeau was elected Canadian Prime Minister in 2015, the country bet on a fresh face promising a progressive agenda that would deliver prosperity and global leadership. His resignation on Monday, after more than nine years at the helm, is an admission of failure.

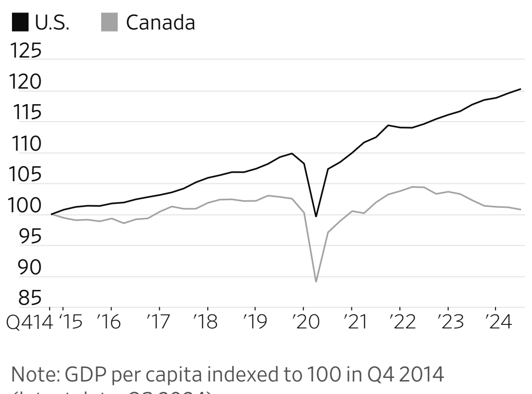
Mr. Trudeau's surrender came two days before his Liberal Party was set to hold a special caucus to discuss his future ahead of the scheduled October election. With polls indicating voter support for the ruling Liberals below 20%, Mr. Trudeau is jumping rather than wait to be pushed by his own party.

Mr. Trudeau's press conference Monday was his first since deputy PM Chrystia Freeland resigned three weeks ago. In December a majority of the Liberal caucus called for him to step down. Mr. Trudeau stressed that while he's a "fighter," the "country deserves a real choice in the next election, and it's become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election."

The decision leaves a leadership vacuum in Ottawa, but Mr. Trudeau doesn't seem to mind. Rather than call for an early election, he's opted to discontinue Parliament until March 24 without dissolving it. His goal is to give the Liberals more time to choose a less politically reviled candidate. Leader Pierre Poilievre and his Conservative Party currently have a big lead in the pre-election polls.

Canada Falls Further Behind the U.S.

Changes in GDP per capita, Q4 2014-Q3 2024



Note: GDP per capita indexed to 100 in Q4 2014 (latest data: Q3 2024)
Source: National Bank of Canada (Data via StatsCan)

Canadians have soured on the 53-year-old Prime Minister who has presided over national decline. Canada's economy was once tied to America's success, but no more. The startling chart nearby shows the trend in GDP per capita for the U.S. and Canada from late 2014 through the third quarter of 2024. Canadians are now notably poorer than Americans.

The Fraser Institute, a Vancouver think tank, says that from 2014 to 2022 Canada had the third lowest average annual GDP growth rate per capita in the 30-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Blame Mr. Trudeau's tax-and-spend policies, and especially his assault on oil and gas production in the resource-rich nation. This has hurt business investment and productivity gains. But the Liberals refuse to adjust. In November Ottawa produced draft regulations to cap emissions from oil and gas by 2030 at 35% below 2019 levels.

Mr. Trudeau's woke agenda and his efforts to freeze the bank accounts of Canadians who resisted his Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns have also infuriated even moderate Canadians. Immigration has helped the economy avoid a worse decline, but the newcomer influx has led to housing shortages that the Liberals haven't addressed.

Voters are turning against progressive government across the West, and Canadians deserve an urgent chance to render their verdict.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why Does Washington Hold So Much Land?

Thomas Sowell's op-ed "The World's Biggest Landlord Is Washington" (Dec. 26) hits home with me. Federal agencies may own a quarter of the total land area of the U.S., but they own 53% of Oregon's land. How about a project to transfer 20% of such land to the states, maintain 20% in reserve and gradually sell 60% to the private sector? This can include environmental sensitivity and a focus on sustainable use of our natural resources, with housing and jobs as additional priorities.

State Rep. Kevin L. Mannix (R., Ore.)
Salem, Ore.

Mr. Sowell argues that the federal government's massive holdings of land are an anomalous and wasteful feature of the U.S. economic system, and that most of these lands should be privatized. I agree, and so did the nation's founders. To a man, they saw the public domain as a way to generate revenue to discharge the public debt. One of the first acts of Congress during George Washington's presidency, passing the Public Debt Act of 1790, was designed to do just that.

Until the Civil War, things went according to the Founders' wishes. Land sales were a major source of federal revenue. At their peak in 1836, revenue from land sales accounted for 48% of federal revenue. Eventually, the disposal of publicly owned lands petered out with the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934.

During his first term, President Ronald Reagan launched a program to sell federal lands and use the revenue to discharge the public debt. I was assigned the task of designing the program and made public my recommendations in a speech, "Privatize Those Lands," which I delivered in September 1981 at a meeting of the Public Lands Council in Reno, Nevada, a state in which 80.1% of the land is owned by the federal government. Reagan formally endorsed the push to privatize when he signed Executive Order 12348 on Feb. 25, 1982.

Thanks to the U.S. Congress, however, Reagan's embrace of the Founding Fathers' vision of what to do with the public domain, an asset that generates huge negative cashflows, was stillborn. About the only thing we accomplished was to enter the French word "privatize" into Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary in the 1983 ninth edition.

Let's hope the Trump administration has better luck at shrinking the federal government's balance sheet.

Prof. Steve H. Hanke
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore

Mr. Sowell addresses a valid option regarding federal public lands and the nation's debt problem. But selling off federal land would be a quagmire. He lists the four federal agencies with most of that land: the National Park Service (which national parks, monuments or historic sites would be on the block?), the Forest Service (which national forests?), the Fish and Wildlife Service (which national wildlife refuges?) and the Bureau of Land Management (which controls the most land of the four agencies, with the majority of it looking like the desert shown in the online version of the article).

Little of the scrub desert will bring in much revenue, and the rest of it is the nation's crown jewels. There are better ways to address our financial challenges.

Em. Prof. Thomas J. Straka
Clemson University
Pendleton, S.C.

WHO Responds on China, Covid-19 Origins

As a U.S. citizen, Wall Street Journal alumna and current director of communications at the World Health Organization, I write regarding the origins of Covid-19. The WHO's position is and always has been that all hypotheses are still on the table until convincing evidence beyond a reasonable doubt is found ("U.S. Intelligence Review of Covid-19 Origins Masked Deep Divisions," Page One, Dec. 27). But China continues withholding data, information and access, preventing us from understanding how the pandemic began.

For years, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has publicly asked the Chinese government to cooperate and criticized it for not doing so. As he has said, China has a moral obligation to the victims of Covid-19 and a scientific obligation to enable the world to prepare for future threats. The U.S. government is aware of the WHO's position.

Dr. Tedros's statements have drawn repeated condemnation from China, and incorrect perceptions persist that WHO has deferred to China. We have not. In fact, Dr. Tedros has openly criticized a 2021 joint scientific report's assessment of Covid-19 origin hypotheses for reaching an assessment without sufficient evidence.

Gabriella Stern
Geneva

'On Eagles' Wings': Comfort and Translation

Eli Federman's op-ed "The Bald Eagle Is Heaven-Sent" (Dec. 31) brings to mind the beautiful hymn "On Eagles' Wings," which is often sung both at Roman Catholic funeral Masses and at many protestant church services. While most of the hymn is based on Psalm 91 from the Old Testament, the refrain is based on Exodus 19:4, when God told the Israelites, after their flight from Egypt, that He had carried them "on eagles' wings" through their times of trial. The refrain reads:

And He will raise you up on eagles' wings,
bear you on the breadth of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of His hands.

To me, this brings a message of comfort, love and hope to those who mourn their loved ones, and a feeling of peace and resilience for those who are struggling in a troubled world.

Rosemary Roberts
Waterbury, Conn.

The Homeless-Industrial Complex Wants More Funds

No one should be surprised that homelessness increases when governments spend more money to "solve" the problem ("The Blue State Homeless Boom," Review & Outlook, Dec. 31). One starts to suspect that the consultants, community organizers and nonprofits to which governments outsource are getting paid on a per-homeless-person basis, and the metric for success is how many homeless are "served," not a reduction in the homeless population.

The greater the homeless head count, the bigger the "crisis," the louder the plea for funds, and the larger the share of the budget allocated to it.

If you think California has a homeless problem now, after spending $24 billion over the past five years, wait until California spends $48 billion.

William Matthews
Mattapoisett, Mass.

Mr. Federman states that the Bible mentions the eagle at least 30 times. The Bible, however, uses the term "*nesher*." There is serious scholarship that connects that word with the griffon vulture, the largest bird in that part of the world and a cognate of the Arabic *nesra* (or *nasr*), which definitively refers to the griffon vulture.

In ancient times, the vulture wasn't despised as it is today and was worshiped as a god in several places, including by the Arabians and the Assyrians. It was a symbol of royalty in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The bald eagle is a wonderful and fitting symbol for our country, but the eagle is most probably not referred to in the Bible.

Leon Sutton
Long Beach, N.Y.

Theft Takes a Spiritual Toll

Regarding your editorial "Crime and New California Punishment" (Dec. 28): Progressive prosecutors seem to think that the only thing wrong with theft is that it violates a rule and puts more people in jail—as if theft doesn't deteriorate the soul of the thief and sicken society. It reminds me of "The Decalogue: One," a film by Krzysztof Kieslowski, in which a reporter inquires about a milk project introduced in schools: "But the milk is awful. Kids pour it down the toilets." The headmaster replies, "Not here. We lock the toilets during the main break."

Rev. Gerald J. Bednar
Euclid, Ohio

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Pepper ... And Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"No, I don't hear voices but I keep getting text messages."

OPINION

Trump Can Keep America's AI Advantage

By Dario Amodei
And Matt Pottinger

Legislators on both sides of the aisle recognize that the U.S. must lead the world in artificial intelligence to preserve national security. This gives the incoming Trump administration a chance to establish a historic advantage for the U.S. and the free world.

AI will likely become the most powerful and strategic technology in history. By 2027, AI developed by frontier labs will likely be smarter than Nobel Prize winners across most fields of science and engineering. It will be able to use all the senses and interfaces of a human working virtually—text, audio, video, mouse, keyboard control and internet access—to complete complex tasks that would take people months or years, such as designing new weapons or curing diseases. Imagine a country of geniuses contained in a data center.

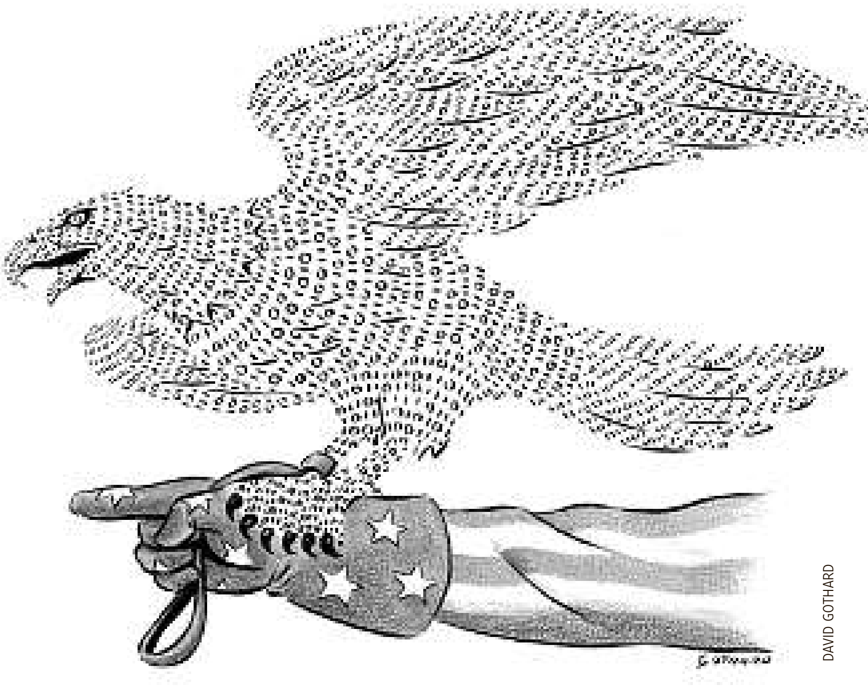
China is trying to catch up. The U.S. needs proactive development efforts and strong export controls.

The nations that are first to build powerful AI systems will gain a strategic advantage over its development. Incoming Trump administration officials can take steps to ensure the U.S. and its allies lead in developing this technology. If they succeed, it could deliver breakthroughs in medicine, energy and economic development. It could also extend American military preeminence. If they fail, another nation—most likely China—could surpass us economically and militarily. It's imperative that free societies with democratic oversight and the rule of law set the norms by which AI is employed. They won't be able to do so if totalitarian governments pioneer these technologies.

Export controls, which ban shipments to China of the high-end chips needed to train advanced AI models, have been a valuable tool in slowing China's AI development. These controls began during the first Trump term and expanded under the Biden administration to cover a wider range of chips and chip-manufacturing equipment. The controls appear to have been effective: The CEO of one of China's leading AI firms recently said the main obstacle he faces is the embargo on high-end chips.

China is trying to work around U.S. controls, including by using shell companies to set up data centers in countries that can still import advanced U.S. chips. This enables China to train its AI models on state-of-the-art chips and catch up with U.S. competitors.

The Trump administration should shut down this avenue of circumvention. One solution is to ensure that data centers in countries that China might use to skirt export controls are allowed to access U.S.-designed AI chips only if they adhere to verifiable security standards and commit not to help China's AI efforts. AI hardware exports should be tracked.



DAVID GOTHARD

We should also ensure that frontier AI remains under our security umbrella by keeping the largest and most critical AI data centers within the U.S. and its closest partners.

Skeptics of these restrictions argue that the countries and companies to which the rules apply will simply switch to Chinese AI chips. This argument overlooks that U.S. chips are superior, giving countries an incentive to follow U.S. rules. China's best AI chips, the Huawei Ascend series, are substantially less capable than the leading chip made by U.S.-based Nvidia. China also may not have the production capacity to keep pace with growing demand. There's not a single noteworthy cluster of Huawei Ascend chips outside China today, suggesting that China is struggling to meet its domestic needs and is in no position to export chips at a meaningful scale.

Because of America's current restrictions on chip-manufacturing equipment, it will likely take China years if not decades to catch up in chip quality and quantity. The CEO of ASML, the world's largest maker of semiconductor manufacturing equipment, has said that these restrictions will cause China to "lag 10 to 15 years behind the West" in high-end chip manufacturing. That could give the U.S. a head start during a critical window. Whoever advances most during the next four years will be in a much stronger position in the decades that follow, given that AI gains will likely compound on one another.

The export and security terms that the U.S. sets will define the chip market for producing powerful AI systems. Countries that want to reap the massive economic benefits will have an incentive to follow the U.S. model rather than use China's inferior chips.

Along with implementing export controls, the U.S. will need to adopt other strategies to promote its AI innovation. President-elect Trump campaigned on accelerating AI data-center construction by improving energy infrastructure and slashing burdensome regulations. These would be welcome steps. Additionally, the administration should assess the national-security threats of AI systems and how they might be used against Americans. It should deploy AI within the federal government, both to increase government efficiency and to enhance national defense.

Mr. Trump has likened AI to a "superpower" and has underscored the importance of the U.S. staying "right at the forefront" of its race against China. His administration's actions will help determine whether democracies or autocracies lead the next technological era. Our shared security, prosperity and freedoms hang in the balance.

Mr. Amodei is CEO and a co-founder of Anthropic, which makes the AI system Claude. Mr. Pottinger is chairman of the China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He served as U.S. deputy national security adviser, 2019-21.

I Can't Keep a Resolution, but Maybe Our Leaders Can

FREE EXPRESSION
By Gerard Baker

I'm a firm believer in New Year's resolutions. The opportunity for an annual "reset," as we probably must now call it, is a mentally valuable one, a course-correction for those of us whose life is in constant danger of being defined by our flaws.

The only problem I have with resolutions is my lack of any resolve to keep them. Take this column. If I make a promise here to be less vituperative, kinder, gentler in my weekly missives, as well-intentioned readers sometimes urge, it will last about two weeks. Something asinine or infuriating in the news will agitate me to another eruption of bile and my pledges will sit as idle as the gym membership I just bought.

At this time of year, then, I like to commit to something more productive—New Year's resolutions for others. That I can't keep any myself doesn't absolve those with more willpower from the obligation to try. With your indulgence, here are some—suggestions, let's say, for 2025 and beyond for key leaders:

President-elect Trump: "Be a king, George," was the advice apocryphally given by his mother to the man who would become George III. Despite the little matter of losing America, he wasn't such a bad monarch, and by the end of his reign, he had indisputably helped make England great again (admittedly with some valuable assists from Lords Nelson and Wellington).

So to a man we know admires royalty: Be a president, Donald. You won. Not only an election. You have revolutionized politics here and in much of the world. Your enemies are routed. You won't be seriously constrained this time by people trying to undermine you, obstruct you or put you in prison.

No one expects you (or wants you) to start sounding like the Dalai Lama, nor at the end of your eighth decade to change what has worked for you so long. But be a president for all Americans. Many of those who didn't support you wish you well this time. You'll get most of your way on policies in any case, but you have a chance to bring the nation along with you and be a genuinely transformative figure in the 21st century—if you allow the nation to come along with you.

President Biden: Try to redeem a little of your battered reputation by being a better post-president. We wish you good health for whatever remains of the span the Lord has allotted you, but don't spend it like the late Jimmy Carter, sniping from retirement, undermining your successor, griping about how you should still be there. From George Washington to George W. Bush there are examples of how to do it right.

My suggestions for Trump, Biden, Harris, the legacy media, European leaders and even Pope Francis.

The early signs aren't encouraging. You seem intent on ending your presidency raining down a shower of ordure on the American people—a pardon for your son; shiny medals for George Soros, Hillary Clinton and Anna Wintour; a cynical, cowardly kick in the teeth for Japan, our vital ally. But your New Year starts again on Jan. 20. C'mon man.

Vice President Kamala Harris: Don't. With respect, ma'am, don't even think about it. From a position of considerable strength, you ran one of the worst presidential campaigns in the modern era—and that was in 2019. Last year you got a rare second chance and thought it was a good idea to offer a sullen electorate demanding change a message of joy and continuity. The third time isn't the charm. You should be able to find some remunerative board positions, and I'm sure Oprah has some openings.

The legacy media: Acknowledge your dramatically diminished state and start the arduous task of repairing the trust you have squandered for the past decade or more with your preachy, priggish partisanship. Take the risk of exposing yourself to different views of the world from those you hear at home, at work and at dinner parties. Reporters, try harder to understand the world as it is and stop constantly telling us how you think it should be. (That's my job.)

European leaders: Listen to your voters. Put their interests first over those of the huddled masses on other teeming shores. Stop strangling citizens with environmental goals that make no difference to the climate and merely benefit citizens of far-flung countries. Start to take responsibility for your own security. Revive your moribund economies with a rekindling of entrepreneurship (it's a French word after all) and a rollback of your overweening states.

Pope Francis (I'm taking a risk with more than my reputation here—this kind of lèse-majesté puts a Catholic soul in peril): Follow your predecessor's selfless example and resign the papacy. There are encouraging signs of a restoration in traditional religious faith in a troubled, secularized world, and the church needs vigorous new leadership to affirm and nourish it.

And yes, before you object, I will submit to some pledges myself. Some of us have certainly contributed too much to the epistemic closure and rancorous tenor that characterizes public debate. So I resolve (at least to try) to acknowledge my own many limitations, to listen more closely to dissent; to elevate occasionally, more than I tear down.

Will the Vice President Run for California Governor?

By Kenneth L. Khachigian

Kamala Harris's postelection message to her supporters has been to "stay in the fight." That may be a sign she's keeping the door open to a 2026 campaign for governor of California. According to a Nov. 13 poll from the University of California, Berkeley's Institute for Governmental Studies, 72% of California Democrats would be very or somewhat likely to vote for her for governor.

Ms. Harris's life will change dramatically on Jan. 20. She will no longer enjoy the luxury of flying on Air Force 2, nor will she be surrounded and supported by a large staff to handle the details of her professional life, as she has been for 21 years, since being sworn in as district attorney of San Francisco. Starting on July 20, her Secret Service protection and chauffeurs will be gone—she'll have to relearn the freeways' rules of the road.

If Ms. Harris reactivates her license to practice law, offers will freely flow for her to join the finest firms. Corporations and prominent foundations will dangle board positions with extensive perks. These would be options for her to use her influence as other politicians have done after leaving high positions. Maybe she won't have to pump her own gasoline after all.

But she could also decide to seek public office again. If so, she has two possible avenues: rebuilding alliances for a presidential reprise in 2028 or running for California governor. If she opts for Sacramento, I suggest she turn to an unlikely source for advice: Richard Nixon. After he lost the 1960 presidential election, Nixon wrote pages analyzing the pros and cons of running for governor of the Golden State.

Ms. Harris is certainly receiving counsel about her future from political advisers and allies, would-be strategists, opinion journalists and, naturally, the second gentleman, Doug Emhoff. Despite the different political, social and media environment during Nixon's time, he faced the same basic dilemma after returning to California in January 1961: Influential people in his life all had strong views on the best course for his career.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur bizarrely told Nixon to run for his old seat in Congress. (Nixon had served in both the House and the Senate.) According to Nixon, MacArthur told him: "California is a great state, but it is too parochial. You should be in Washington, not Sacramento." Len Hall, a close Nixon adviser and former Republican National Committee chairman, had different advice: "Either you run [for governor] or you're finished in national politics." Both were afflicted by a common disease among those dispensing political advice. When your own political future isn't at stake, the counsel tends to be delivered with excessive certitude—something I'm confident Ms. Harris learned during her recent presidential campaign.

Nixon faced a nagging personal issue during his ultimately unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign. As he wrote, in the beginning of the summer of 1961 "I still thought it would be a case of running for the wrong office at the wrong time." He then added: "My biggest problem in the campaign was the question of my actual interest in being governor of California."

Only if she really wants the job. Richard Nixon saw it as a stepping-stone and ended up losing in 1962.

Even if Ms. Harris overcomes this kind of inner turmoil about the wisdom of running for governor, she should take heed of the central burden that confronted Nixon throughout his candidacy. As he defined it, "There was no morning, afternoon, or evening that I did not deny I was planning to use the governorship as a stepping-stone to a presidential candidacy in 1964." This is the very accusation that would befoul a Harris gubernatorial campaign—though perhaps with less intensity due to her relative lack of adversarial press. Ms. Harris would have to answer the question: Does she want to be California's leader, or does she want to be a leader from California who wants to be president in 2028?

It's a fair guess that Mr. Emhoff will be part of his wife's final decision. Pat Nixon fiercely disapproved of Nixon's choice to run for governor. Ms. Harris and Mr. Emhoff won't have only the normal family dynamics coloring her political aspirations; they also must give thought to the type of question Nixon never had to answer: To what extent was the vice president aware of President Biden's cognitive decline during moments of potential national and international crises, and how concerned was she?

Still, polls indicate Ms. Harris could win a gubernatorial campaign if she runs. If she decides to do so, I welcome her back to California, where gasoline is too expensive and tax rates too high. She can join the rest of us in complaining to the governor.

Mr. Khachigian was an aide to Richard Nixon and chief speechwriter to Ronald Reagan and is author of the memoir "Behind Closed Doors: In the Room With Reagan and Nixon."

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Notable & Quotable: Schumer

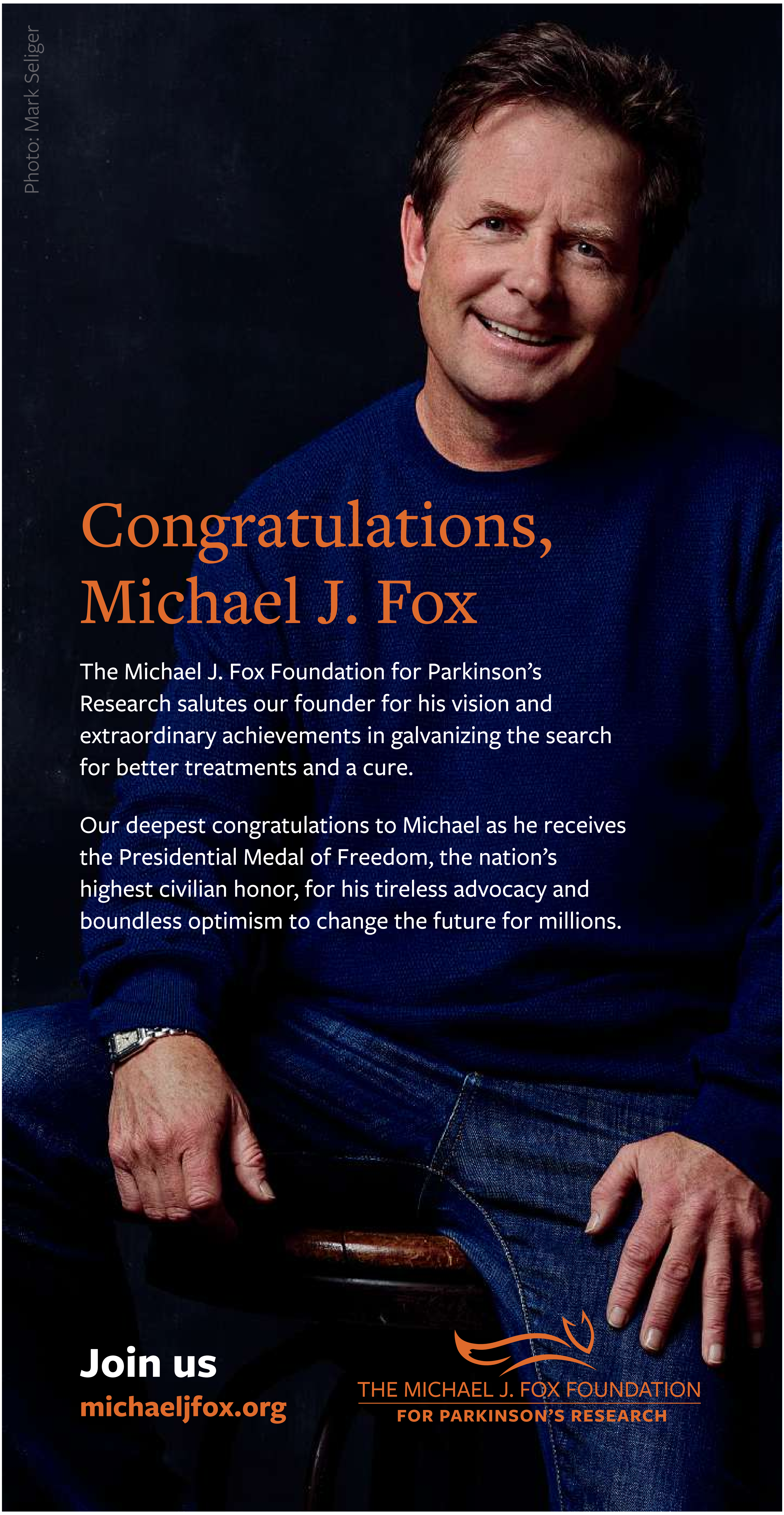
Kristen Welker interviews Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer on NBC's "Meet the Press," Jan. 5:

Welker: I want to play you a little bit of something you said last year. Take a look.

Schumer (clip): I talk to President Biden, you know, regularly, sometimes several times in a week, or usually several times in a week. His mental acuity is great. It's fine. It's as good as it's been over the years. All this right-wing propaganda that his mental acuity has declined is wrong.

Welker: Leader Schumer, what do you say to Americans who feel as though you and other top Democrats misled them about President Biden's mental acuity?

Schumer: No. Look, we didn't. And let's—let's look—let's look at President Biden. He's had an amazing record. The legislation we passed, one of the most significant groups of legislation since the New Deal—since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, putting in 235 judges, a record. And he's a patriot. He's a great guy. And when he stepped down, he did it on his own because he thought it was better not only for the Democratic Party, for America. We should all salute him. We should all salute him.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Michael J. Fox
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research salutes our founder for his vision and extraordinary achievements in galvanizing the search for better treatments and a cure.
Our deepest congratulations to Michael as he receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his tireless advocacy and boundless optimism to change the future for millions.
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Disney, Fubo Ink Streaming Deal

Live TV services to merge, ending litigation related to Venu Sports venture

By Lauren Thomas and Isabella Simonetti

Walt Disney has agreed to combine its Hulu + Live TV streaming service with sports-focused **FuboTV**, a deal that will also end pending litigation over the formation of Venu Sports, the companies said Monday.

Under the agreement, Disney will own roughly 70% of Fubo, whose management team will operate the new venture. Hulu + Live TV and Fubo would continue to be offered as separate streaming services with more than 6.2 million subscribers combined in North America.

In February 2024, Fubo sued to block the launch of Venu, a joint streaming venture between Disney's ESPN, **Warner Bros. Discovery** and **Fox** Corp., alleging the companies wouldn't let Fubo carry a small bundle of sports-focused channels that they were looking to include in the new service. Fox and The Wall Street Journal's parent, **News Corp**, share common ownership.

In August, a judge granted a preliminary injunction to block Venu's launch while the litigation continued, saying the service would "substantially lessen competition and restrain trade." Venu's three partners appealed the decision.

Disney, Fox and Warner are making an aggregate cash payment of $220 million to Fubo to resolve the legal dispute. Disney also has committed to provide a $145 million term loan to Fubo in 2026.

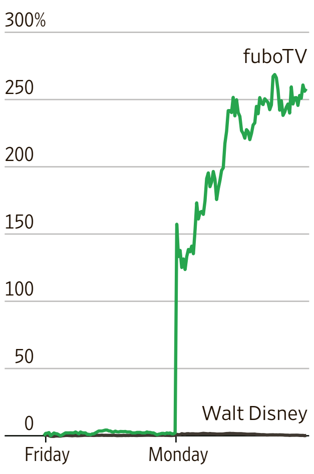
Shares of Fubo, which had a market value of about $480 million as of Friday, soared nearly 251% Monday.

The combined company will be the second-largest online pay-TV provider, behind YouTube TV, which costs $82.99 a month. These offerings, which deliver a cable-TV-like package of channels via streaming, are very important to devoted sports fans who want to watch live games and cable-news viewers.

Together, Hulu and Fubo expect to have more than $6

Please turn to page B2

Stock performance



Source: FactSet

Chip Stocks Push Up Nasdaq; S&P 500 Rallies

By Angus Berwick and David Uberti

Chip shares started the week with a bang, helping the stock market largely extend its gains from late last week.

Global semiconductor stocks rallied after Taiwan's Foxconn, a key assembler of Nvidia and Apple products, posted record quarterly revenue. The strong demand for servers to power artificial intelligence boosted chip shares stateside, including Advanced Micro Devices, Micron Technology and Super Micro Computer. Nvidia shares' 3.4% gain helped them log a record close.

The Nasdaq Composite led the pack with a 1.2% gain, pushing the tech-heavy index to its best start to the year since 2009. The S&P 500 rose 0.6%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gave back early gains to close down nearly 0.1%, or 26 points lower.

At the same time, investors applauded a report by the Washington Post that President-elect Donald Trump's aides are exploring plans to apply tariffs on critical imports only, instead of on all imports. Pared-back tariffs could limit the fallout of a policy that economists warn will push up prices and strengthen the dollar—a potential blow to American exporters.

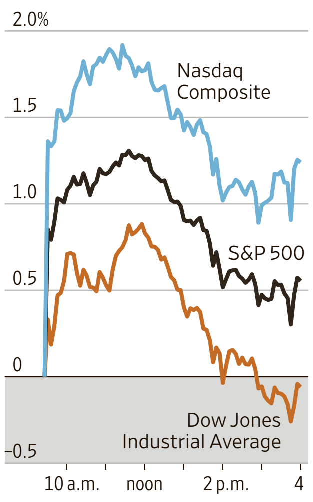
A weekslong bond selloff continued Monday despite the incoming president's denial of the report. Investors fear that steep tariffs, lower taxes and faster economic growth could keep inflation stubbornly elevated. The yield on the 30-year U.S. Treasury bond, a key benchmark for borrowing costs across the economy, notched its highest level since November 2023, hitting 4.836%. The yield on the 10-year Treasury settled at 4.616%.

Elsewhere:

◆ **Oil prices fell after a five-day winning streak. Benchmark U.S. crude futures, which closed Monday at $73.56 a barrel, are up 9.5% over the past month.**

◆ **Bitcoin topped $102,000. Crypto-buying tech firm MicroStrategy said Monday that it purchased $101 million worth of bitcoin during the last two trading days of 2024.**

Index performance on Monday



Source: FactSet

Chinese Parts Create Tariff Risk for U.S. Bikes

By Natasha Khan

In 2022, Brian Riley opened a bicycle factory in Seymour, Ind., shifting production of his **Guardian Bikes** brand to the U.S. from China. The problem for him now: Nearly all the parts still come from China.

Riley had aspirations to use American-made components before the November presidential election of Donald Trump, who has vowed to enact steep tariffs on imports from China.

Riley, founder and chief executive of the children's bike maker, hopes these tariffs will help him shift to U.S. components faster by making American-made bikes and parts more competitive against Chinese-made ones. But it is still a tall order. Chinese manufacturers have dominated the bicycle supply chain for decades.

Almost all of the bicycles sold in the U.S. are imported, and the vast majority of those are made in China or assembled from Chinese parts, according to industry estimates and trade data. A typical bicycle is made of 30 to 40 parts, most of them from different Chinese manufacturers.

For now, components from China represent about 90% of the total cost of Guardian's parts. By the end of next year, Riley hopes that figure will be about 20%. Guardian is starting production of its own bike frames and is working to source parts such as grips and reflectors stateside. As a result of Guardian's new manufacturing, American-made parts could represent about 60% of the cost.

Riley moved his production to the U.S. because he wanted to build a safer bike that could prevent the kind of head-over-heels braking accident that had injured his grandfather years earlier. Many bikes sold at retailers such as Walmart or Target aren't fully assembled when they are shipped to the retailers from overseas, so manufacturers don't have oversight on the final assembly.

A Guardian Bikes plant in Indiana. Guardian is starting to make its own bike frames and is working to source parts stateside.

"By controlling every aspect of production, we can guarantee the quality of every bike that rolls off our assembly line," he said. Guardian prices its children's bikes between $149 and $399. That puts the company's direct-to-consumer bikes at a price point between mass-market brands and more premium ones sold at bike shops.

Moving production to the U.S. isn't a viable option for all bike companies. After Trump increased tariffs on Chinese imports in 2018, premium children's bike maker **Prevelo Bikes** moved its production to Taiwan. It has since expanded production to Thailand and Cambodia. Prevelo's bikes range in price from $240 to $1,400. The factories it uses are highly specialized with expensive machinery, said Prevelo's chief executive, Jacob Rheuban.

"I am not in the position to build those factories here," said Rheuban. "If we are looking to reshore, we need a larger movement on behalf of the entire industry."

Even if Prevelo assembled bikes here, it would still be building them using foreign components subject to tariffs, Rheuban said.

Larger manufacturers also have shifted production in response to U.S. tariffs on China. Taiwanese bike company Giant Group, which makes about four million bikes a year, recently opened a factory in Vietnam because

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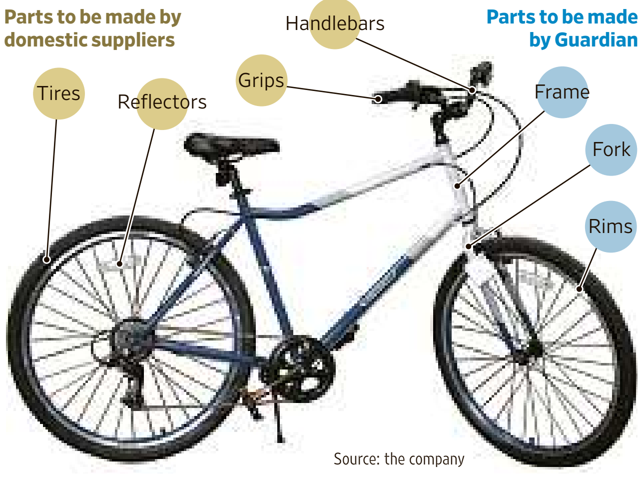
Aspiring to American Made

Guardian Bikes says 90% of its bicycle parts are made in China, but it hopes to change that.

Guardian's goals for 2026



Source: the company

New Year Could See Accounting Changes

By Mark Maurer

The Financial Accounting Standards Board will evaluate two weighty issues in 2025 on how companies report their performance metrics and research and development spending as it looks to refill its slate of potential new rules.

The accounting standard-setter for U.S. companies and nonprofits recently requested public feedback on the next batch of issues it should prioritize, with a deadline at the end of June.

The board will determine whether to add the issues raised to its standard-setting or research agendas over the next year and beyond, Chairman Rich Jones said in an interview.

The body expects to finalize new rules on accounting for software costs, environmental credits and government grants in 2025, Jones said. The FASB's standards, which can take years to come to fruition, can saddle companies with a greater compliance burden but also give more technical clarity, while providing investors with new corporate details.

Notably, the FASB could dive into two hot-button accounting topics: companies' use of financial key performance indicators, or KPIs, and their accounting for intangible assets such as drug development, cryptocurrency or brands.

"You're seeing us really explore what, depending on the direction those projects take, could be a very significant shift in financial reporting," Jones said.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, or Ebitda, and free cash flow, which is the money a company has left over after paying operating and capital expenses, are not defined under U.S. accounting rules. Measures such as net income, revenue, earnings per share and diluted earnings per share are defined.

The FASB is getting input on whether investors and others would benefit from moving a measure like Ebitda into financial

Please turn to page B2

INSIDE

BUSINESS NEWS
Top U.S. pork producer Smithfield Foods files for initial public offering. **B3**

HEARD ON THE STREET
Healthcare stocks offer buying opportunities. **B10**

AI Bots Get Autonomy For Some Work Tasks

By Belle Lin

Artificial-intelligence agents have emerged as one of the most exciting aspects of generative AI for business because they take chatbots to the next level, performing complex tasks without help from humans.

These autonomous AI agents can follow instructions and do things from checking a car rental reservation at the airport to screening potential sales leads.

Software companies from **Salesforce** to **ServiceNow**, **Microsoft** and **Workday** last year all announced their own AI agents, which they say can help businesses be even more hands-off in areas like recruiting employees, contacting potential sales leads, creating marketing content and managing their information-technology.

If these AI agents work as promised, they could also provide businesses with the return on investment they have been looking for out of generative AI. According to some corporate technology leaders, that means the ability to tie the technology to a reduction in the number of hours employees work, or even how many new people they need to hire.

Phu Nguyen, the head of digital workplace at **Pure Storage**, considers AI agents an obvious boost for each of the data storage firm's employees: "Why should executives be the only people that have a ghost writer that writes their emails or does their slides? Imagine, now, all employees have that power?" he said.

Still, more AI agents can mean more problems, especially in cybersecurity, according to market research and IT consulting firm Gartner. By 2028, at least 15% of daily business decisions will be made autonomously through agentic AI—up from 0% in 2024, Gartner said. But, also by that time, 25% of enterprise breaches will be tied to AI agent abuse.

Here are four companies that have started integrating AI

Please turn to page B2

INDEX TO BUSINESSES

These indexes cite notable references to most parent companies and businesspeople in today's edition. Articles on regional page inserts aren't cited in these indexes.

INDEX TO PEOPLE

America's Riskiest Borrowers Are Nursing a Financial Hangover

In 2024, people fell behind on credit-card bills and car payments more often than at any point since the Great Recession. Scan this code for a WSJ podcast on what borrowers need to know.

BUSINESS & FINANCE

U.S.-Made Bikes Face Tariff Risk

MICHAEL SWENSEN FOR WSJ (2)

Continued from page B1

the U.S. imposes lower tariffs on imports from that country, a Giant spokesperson said. The Vietnam factory currently has a production capacity of 100,000 bikes a year. Giant also has facilities in China and Europe.

Riley decided to locate his factory in Indiana because it was close enough to most places in the U.S. for two-day shipping and because it was near steel mills where the company could source material when it eventually made its own frames.

Opening a factory in the U.S. wasn't easy. Riley was able to hire a group of skilled workers because a local ironing-board manufacturer went out of business. At first, workers were slow to build the bikes, putting together 100 a day. It took time and constant tweaking of the assembly line to improve their speed and efficiency. Guardian's labor costs shot up, though they were partially offset by the lower freight costs of shipping individual components from China rather than mostly assembled bikes.

"We had to bite the bullet," said Riley, who is 37 years old. "We had to be willing to lose money for a while to get to the other side of the strategy."

The factory's 250 staff can churn out up to 2,700 bikes a day, and Guardian has the scale to begin contracting with U.S. parts manufacturers.

Brian Riley, founder and CEO of Guardian Bikes, hopes tariffs on China will help speed up the company's shift to U.S. parts.

Guardian plans to begin making bike frames at the factory this year using American steel. The bike maker has asked its Brazilian rim supplier to consider a facility in Indiana near Guardian's factory. Guardian also is considering making rims itself. The bike maker has approached U.S. suppliers that could provide grips and reflectors. Other labor-intensive parts such as hubs or cranks may be harder to source in the U.S., Riley said.

During Trump's first term, tariffs on assembled children's bikes from China rose to 36% from 11%. Assembled bikes were later exempted, which meant Guardian paid levies for imported parts while some of its competitors didn't pay tariffs to import assembled bikes.

Since the U.S. lifted the assembled-bike exemption in 2024, the cost to make Guardian's bikes has been more comparable with other bikes sold in the U.S., Riley said. In addition, Trump has proposed cutting the corporate tax rate to 15% from 21% for companies that make their products in the U.S. and expand tariffs on foreign-made goods.

"Everyone says making bikes here is impossible," Riley said. He said his factory shows it isn't.

AI Bots Get More Power In Decisions

Continued from page B1

agents into their products and operations.

Johnson & Johnson

At New Jersey-based **Johnson & Johnson**, AI agents are being used to help the health-care giant with the chemical synthesis process in drug discovery.

Once a promising pharmaceutical molecule has been identified, according to Chief Information Officer Jim Swanson, it needs to be measured for its cost effectiveness and reliability. And there are a lot of variables to consider in doing so—from temperature to which reactions are being optimized.

The solution: an autonomous AI agent that can determine the best time to conduct a solvent switch, a process by which one solvent is swapped for another to crystallize a molecule and actually create the drug, Swanson said. Without the help of these technologies, J&J's scientists would go through multiple iterations of the same process manually.

"We're using agents now to take that content, with all those variables, and figure out, 'When's the next time to do that switch and actually execute it?'"

MICHAEL BUCHER/WSJ

Johnson & Johnson uses AI agents to determine cost effectiveness and reliability in its drug development process.

he said. The agents are combined with traditional machine learning and digital twins—essentially digital replicas of real-world entities—to speed up the process, he said.

Still, J&J is proceeding with caution. It is being "mindful of this risk with autonomous agents that could be creating bad behaviors," Swanson said, such as generating biased information and outputting hallucinations. Employees review the outputs of its agents, he said, but the company is still figuring out how that oversight can be done more systematically.

Moody's

AI agents are becoming key players in research at **Moody's**, the New York-based financial analysis and software company.

Many aspects of research, including industry comparisons and looking at companies' Securities and Exchange Commission filings, were already outsourced to lower-cost areas outside the U.S., said Nick Reed, the company's chief product officer. Now, some of that work is being done by autonomous AI agents—specifically those that work in conjunction with other agents.

The company has developed a total of 35 agents, some for smaller tasks like project management, and linked them up with agents for supervising them, creating what Reed calls a "multiagent system."

Moody's agents are given specific instructions, personalities and access to data and research. As a result, they can come to different conclusions, especially for complex topics like analyzing the financial fitness of a company that appears healthy, but is facing geopolitical risk. "It's almost a bit like your ability as an individual person," Reed said. "What we worked out is that an agent is better at not multitasking."

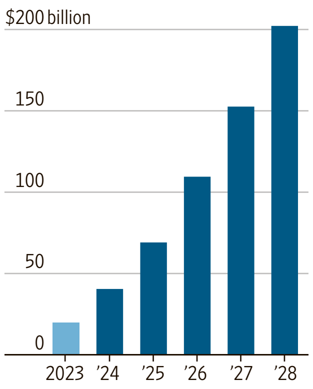
EBay

EBay is using AI agents to help write code and create marketing campaigns. The company also plans to roll out agents that can help buyers find items and sellers list goods.

To make it all happen, the San Jose, Calif.-based online marketplace created its own "agent framework" that can use several large language models in the background, said Nitzan Mekel-Bobrov, eBay's chief AI officer.

The agent framework functions as an orchestrator, dictating which AI models will be used for certain tasks like translating code and suggesting code snippets, Mekel-Bobrov said. As its agents become more sophisticated, they will be able to act more autonomously—writing more code on their own, line by line, as human developers would, he added. "As employees interact more and more with the systems, it also learns their specific preferences," he said.

Projected worldwide spending on AI and generative AI solutions by enterprises



Note: 2023 is an estimate; forecasts published August 2024

Source: International Data Corp

Deutsche Telekom

Telecommunications giant **Deutsche Telekom** has rolled out an AI agent for its employees to ask any question about internal policies and benefits, and for its service staff to ask questions about its products and services.

About 10,000 employees use the AI agent each week, said Jonathan Abrahamson, Deutsche Telekom's Chief Product and Digital Officer.

Deutsche Telekom also is experimenting with letting the agent, which it calls askT, perform tasks on behalf of employees, Abrahamson added. An employee who wants to book their next vacation, for instance, can tell askT to put the leave request into the human resources software system on their behalf.

Disney, Fubo Ink TV Deal

Continued from page B1

billion in revenue, Fubo executives told investors on a call Monday. In 2028, the company anticipates having over $7.5 billion in revenue and $550 million in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.

Venu announced in August that it would be available at $42.99 a month and carry some of the most valuable sports properties including the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, National Football League and college teams. That price tag is significantly cheaper than the traditional cable bundle, which can run north of $100 a month. ESPN plans to launch its own direct-to-consumer product later this year.

—Jessica Toonkel contributed to this article.

FASB Eyes Accounting Changes

Continued from page B1

cial statements and creating a standard definition companies could use, even if they made non-GAAP adjustments to it. If companies were to deviate from that definition outside of their financials, the Securities and Exchange Commission or other regulators might require them to disclose their rationale, Jones said.

"Do I think there's something we could do there? My own view is absolutely," Jones said. "I'm eager to see what we learn from our stakeholders."

Several KPIs companies mention outside of the financial statements are considered non-GAAP, meaning they go beyond U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. The project, if added to the standard-setting agenda, would mark the FASB's first major effort to tackle non-GAAP accounting.

Defining which types of companies should have a particular KPI in their financials would be an important part of the analysis, Jones said. "You might argue that Ebitda is a better measure for a manufacturer but not a very good measure for a financial institution," Jones said.

Companies rely increasingly on these measures, sometimes to present an overly optimistic picture of profitability. Some companies' earnings news releases regularly feature adjusted Ebitda and adjusted free cash flow, which are non-GAAP staples.

Project would mark its first major effort on non-GAAP reporting.

Executives usually say focusing on core operating earnings is the most accurate way to depict financial performance to investors, but their approach may vary. "Sometimes, clients are surprised by how much freedom they have in terms of what they can do with their KPIs," said Kern Roberts, head of Chatham Financial's global accounting advisory team.

Most investors use their own adjusted version of companies' KPIs. The FASB should require companies to consistently disclose the inputs to KPIs such as the amortization amount used in a company's Ebitda calculation, said David Gonzales, senior accounting analyst at Moody's Ratings and member of a FASB advisory group.

"It would cut down a lot of our time trying to understand and find these things in financial statements," Gonzales said.

Another major project is to improve how companies account for and disclose intangible assets, or any asset they can't touch. The FASB is getting feedback on either pursuing one broad accounting model for all intangibles or grouping assets from different industries together into similar buckets like the development of software and medicine. Existing guidance on intangibles covers specific areas such as software, R&D and certain industries.

The project would also evaluate ways to make it easier for investors to compare earnings for companies that grow through acquisitions with those that grow organically.

Companies will likely have mixed views on the prospect of adding more of these assets to their balance sheet, potentially making it one of the FASB's more controversial projects, said Scott Ehrlich, managing director at Mind the GAAP, an accounting training and consulting firm. "You're going to have a subset of companies that welcome an opportunity to finally reflect an asset on the balance sheet for what is really driving the value of the company," Ehrlich said. "Other companies may be less enthusiastic about it because the cost of valuing and recognizing the intangible probably isn't worth the benefits that they're obtaining."

The FASB in recent weeks has asked the public to say by April and May if they want new rules on KPIs and intangibles, respectively, after having researched the issues the past few years. In 2025, it expects to decide whether to proceed.

Meta Appoints UFC President To Its Board

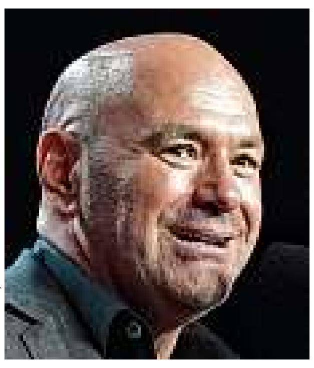
Tech investor Charlie Songhurst and Exor CEO John Elkann were also elected

By Dean Seal

Meta Platforms said Monday that UFC President Dana White is among three new members of its board of directors.

Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg said White, Exor CEO John Elkann and technology investor Charlie Songhurst were elected as directors to aid in the company's focus on artificial intelligence and wearable technology.

Zuckerberg is a noted fan of mixed martial arts, the fighting sport at the center of UFC, and has been spotted at events with White in the past, including the UFC 300 event in Las Vegas in April. White has also been a high-profile supporter and friend of President-elect Donald Trump. His appointment comes as Zuckerberg and others in the tech industry try to align themselves with the incoming Trump administration.



EVAN VUCCI/AP

UFC President Dana White

"I've never been interested in joining a board of directors until I got the offer to join Meta's board," White said. "I am a huge believer that social media and AI are the future."

Meta touted White's success in making UFC a global business. Elkann runs Exor, which is a major investment company in Europe controlled by the Agnelli business dynasty family.

Songhurst previously served as general manager and head of global corporate strategy at Microsoft, with a focus on partnerships and M&A. He was also part of a four-person Meta Advisory Group that Zuckerberg started last year to consult with the company's management team on artificial intelligence and other strategic opportunities related to its tech and product road map.

Since the summer, Meta has been positioning itself for a potential Trump White House. Zuckerberg called Trump a "badass" after he was wounded by a gunman during a rally in July.

He then sent a letter to Republican Rep. Jim Jordan oh Ohio the following month, saying President Biden's White House was wrong to pressure Facebook to censor content in 2021 related to the Covid-19 pandemic and that it wouldn't comply with any such requests in the future.

Meta donated $1 million to Trump's inaugural fund, The Wall Street Journal reported last month. Other companies and leaders, including Amazon.com, Uber Technologies, and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, are making similar donations.

—Meghan Bobrowsky contributed to this article.

Top U.S. Pork Producer Smithfield Files for IPO

JIM LO SCALZO/EPA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Smithfield Foods, which was acquired by China's WH Group more than a decade ago, is once again going public in the U.S.

Smithfield, the largest U.S. pork producer, on Monday filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for a proposed initial public offering.

It plans to list its shares on the Nasdaq Global Select Market under the symbol SFD.

The Smithfield, Va., company didn't indicate how many shares it plans to sell or how much it aims to raise.

WH Group bought Smithfield in 2013 in a $4.7 billion deal that was then one of the biggest takeovers of an American business by a Chinese company. The combined company went public in Hong Kong the following year.

WH Group, the world's largest pork-producing company by sales, last year said it was planning a U.S. IPO for Smithfield.

Smithfield said it generated sales of $14.2 billion and adjusted earnings of $1.3 billion before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization for the 12 months ended Sept. 29, 2024.

The company said it plans to use proceeds from the offering for investments in infrastructure, automation and capacity expansion.

—Colin Kellaher

Smaller Companies Are Rosy on M&A

By Ben Glickman

Smaller companies and private-equity firms are optimistic about dealmaking this year, just like their bigger counterparts.

About 54% of leaders at midmarket companies and small private-equity firms surveyed by Citizens Financial expect the deal environment in 2025 to be strong. That is up from 47% in last year's survey and a five-year high.

Wall Street is optimistic that activity in mergers and acquisitions will increase this year, buoyed by a business-friendly incoming Trump presidential administration and reductions in interest rates.

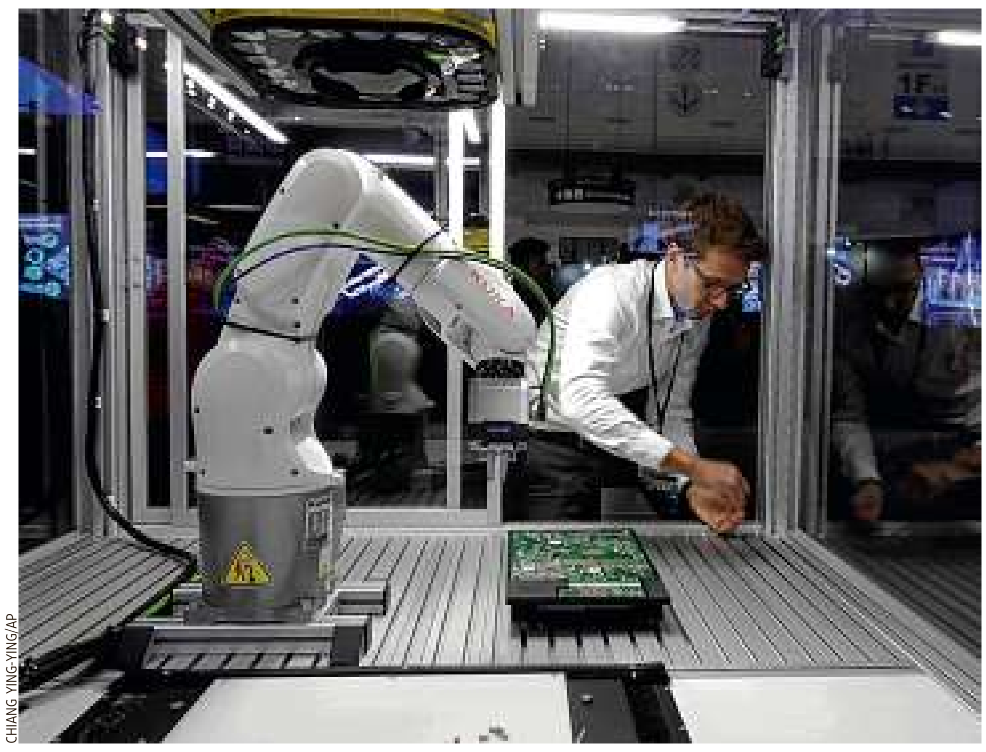
Buyout firms' deal activity has stagnated in recent years because of economic uncertainty and higher rates.

Now, facing sustained pressure from investors, they appear to see an opening: About 64% of the private-equity firms that were surveyed expect a greater flow of deals in 2025, and the vast majority of that group say they plan to buy more than they did in 2024.

The survey included executives at 274 smaller companies and 126 private-equity firms.

It was conducted in October and November, both before and after the presidential election.

The companies surveyed had annual revenue of less than $1 billion, while the buyout shops had funds of $1.5 billion or less.



CHIANG YING-YING/AP

The Taiwanese assembler of products for Apple and Nvidia said quarterly revenue rose 15%.

Foxconn Posts Record Revenue For Fourth Quarter on AI Demand

By Jiahui Huang

Taiwan's **Foxconn** raked in a record amount of revenue for the fourth quarter, helped by robust demand for servers to power burgeoning artificial-intelligence technologies.

Foxconn, an assembler of **Apple** and **Nvidia** products formally known as Hon Hai Precision Industry, said Sunday that quarterly revenue rose 15% on the year to 2.132 trillion New Taiwan dollars, equivalent to $64.75 billion. That marked its highest-ever fourth-quarter revenue and beat a FactSet-compiled estimate of NT$2.07 trillion.

The company also forecast "significant growth" in first-quarter sales.

Foxconn's December sales rose 42% to NT$654.83 billion, also beating FactSet-compiled estimates, while full-year sales rose 11% to a record NT$6.860 trillion.

The Taiwan-listed company said it recorded annual sales growth in almost all of its major segments, driven by demand for AI servers. The expansion of its auto-related business, and strong demand for new computing products, also boosted sales.

Annual and quarterly sales at Foxconn's smart-consumer-electronics segment, which includes smartphones, TVs, game consoles and others, slipped slightly, which it attributed to a high base effect a year earlier caused by delayed orders in 2022.

The company is expected to post full fourth-quarter earnings results in mid-March.

Foxconn's shares climbed 2.6% in Monday's trading.

Could Making a New Woolly Mammoth Help Human Health?

TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Colossal Biosciences wants to use genetic engineering to create new animals that resemble extinct creatures. Scan this code for a podcast with CEO Ben Lamm on what the technology means for human health.

Siemens Says Data Centers Need New Energy Source

Executive cautions that green options can't meet AI's power demands

By Nina Kienle

MAANSI SRIVASTAVA FOR WSJ

The rapid growth of data centers relies upon energy, but the sourcing of this power is holding back the data-center market, according to Siemens executive Matthias Rebellius.

SIEMENS/REUTERS

There isn't enough green energy around the world to power data centers, and operators need to look elsewhere for a solution to the artificial intelligence energy-consumption conundrum, the head of **Siemens**'s Smart Infrastructure division said.

Electrical-equipment makers have been among the early beneficiaries of a boom in data-center construction, as companies snap up gear such as power transformers, generators and switchboards to build more facilities. This gives the likes of Siemens's Smart Infrastructure division insight into the challenges facing data-center companies as they race to satisfy AI's growing computing needs.

Energy sourcing is one of the main factors holding back the data-center market, and it needs to be addressed, Siemens Smart Infrastructure Chief Executive Matthias Rebellius said in an interview.

Data centers provide the computing power that AI models need to run, but consume hefty amounts of energy, and water for cooling. Their rapid growth during the past two years has raised the question of where the energy to power them will come from, Rebellius said.

"The world needs a new plan," Rebellius said. "It's just a question of speed and how much can be done at the same time."

Operators of so-called hyperscale data centers are looking at green energy, but Rebellius said this isn't the solution. Some are now considering nuclear power or small nuclear reactors, while hydrogen could be talked about in the long run, he said.

Nevertheless, Rebellius said the data-center market is bound to experience a normalization after the current phase of rapid growth driven by AI.

In the year to September, orders at Siemens's data-center business surged around 60% to top €3.6 billion, equivalent to $3.74 billion, while revenue jumped 50% to more than €2 billion, the company said.

"We will not see 50% growth every year—not our company, not others—but we will continue to see mid-double-digit growth in the data-center range, which is more than double the normal infrastructure market and four times" gross domestic product, Rebellius said.

Siemens Smart Infrastructure in December said it was targeting comparable revenue growth of 6% to 9% and profit margin of 16% to 20% during the next three to five years, which will overlap with President-elect Donald Trump's second term and a new German government after the country's elections early this year. In fiscal 2024, the business reported comparable revenue growth of 9% and profit margin of 17.3%.

In Germany, the uncertain political situation is concerning, and Rebellius hopes the new government will come in place soon, he said.

Rebellius remains optimistic about the division's prospects in the U.S., where he expects the business to be as successful in the next four years as it was during Trump's first presidency or under President Biden, he said.

Possible trade tariffs aren't a concern due to the high proportion of local sourcing for Siemens's Smart Infrastructure division, Rebellius said, adding that the business has more than 85% localized supply for Americas, China and Europe.

Moreover, the Inflation Reduction Act—President Biden's signature climate legislation—is unlikely to be stopped, he added.

Nvidia CEO Pitches Humanoid Robots

By Asa Fitch

Nvidia chief Jensen Huang held forth at a consumer-electronics showcase in Nevada on Monday, touting his inroads in AI agents, self-driving cars and robotics on a day when his company's valuation reached its highest-ever level.

Taking the stage at the annual CES conference in Las Vegas, Huang showed "physical AI" tools that he said would help robots learn using simulated environments that closely mimic the real world. That could bring more automation to factories and boost a humanoid-robot market that the company said could be worth $38 billion in the next couple of decades.

"The ChatGPT moment for general robotics is just around the corner," he said, flanked by a lineup of more than a dozen humanoid robots. He was referencing the explosion of interest in AI following the release of OpenAI's chatbot more than two years ago.

In the address, which followed a trading session that sent Nvidia's value to $3.66 trillion, Huang also highlighted how the company was fast making inroads in the auto industry.

He said Nvidia reached a deal to provide driver-assistance chips and software for future Toyota vehicles, adding to a list of automotive partners that include Mercedes and Volvo. He forecast the company's automotive revenue at $5 billion in its next fiscal year, up from about $4 billion this year.

The company reported $1.1 billion in automotive revenue in its last full fiscal year—but Huang's $5 billion figure included sales of other products and services to the industry.

Spectrum Operator Files for Bankruptcy

By Becky Yerak And Drew FitzGerald

Satellite-communications operator **Ligado Networks** filed for bankruptcy and accused the U.S. government of improperly blocking it from commercializing licensed spectrum through what it called one of the biggest uncompensated seizures of private property in modern U.S. history.

The Reston, Va.-based company filed for chapter 11 Sunday in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del., with a proposal agreed to by many of its creditors, including **Fortress Investment Group** and **Cerberus Capital Management**, that would slash its debt by more than $7 billion, Ligado said.

The company said it would "take advantage of the breathing spell" in bankruptcy proceedings to pursue its lawsuit "against the U.S. government to obtain just compensation for the taking of the spectrum" granted by the Federal Communications Commission.

In its 2023 lawsuit, Ligado said its spectrum rights were worth as much as $39 billion but that what it called the government's unconstitutional seizure had destroyed the entire value of its assets.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment on Ligado's bankruptcy filing. A defense department representative couldn't be reached for immediate comment.

YUKI IWAMURA/BLOOMBERG NEWS

The cosmetics retailer said it got a lift from stronger-than-expected holiday shopping.

Ulta Names Steelman CEO, Seeks to Counter Slowdown

By Connor Hart

Ulta Beauty said Kecia Steelman will succeed David Kimbell as chief executive, as the company aims to reaccelerate its sales amid a global slowdown in the beauty market.

The cosmetics retailer on Monday also increased its fourth-quarter outlook, saying it now expects comparable sales to increase modestly thanks to a stronger-than-expected holiday shopping season. It most recently guided for comparable sales to be down 1% to flat for the full year.

Kimbell, 58 years old, will retire from the top role after 11 years with the company. He is credited with increasing the company's annual revenue to more than $11 billion.

Steelman, 53, has been tapped to lead Ulta during a transitional period for the brand as increased competition weighs on growth.

Ulta executives previously said they expect to focus on investments in 2025 that will position the company for stronger performance despite wavering consumer confidence. Ulta has said it expects to add 200 stores to its more than 1,400-location footprint through 2027.

Steelman has served in a variety of executive roles since joining Ulta in 2014, including chief operating officer most recently. Prior to joining the cosmetics company, Steelman held leadership roles at Family Dollar, Home Depot and Target.

With her promotion to CEO, effective Monday, Steelman's base salary will increase to nearly $1.4 million from about $1.1 million. Her annual cash incentive target will grow to 180% of her base salary, from 115%, while her long-term incentive plan target will be increased to 710% of her base salary from 380%.

Kimbell's total compensation for 2023 was about $12.7 million, according to the company's most recent annual report.

Shares rose 2.0% to $439 in after-hours trading.

ArcelorMittal South Africa to Close Unit

By Pierre Bertrand

ArcelorMittal South Africa is to wind down its long-steel products business, affecting around 3,500 jobs, after weak economic conditions, high costs and Chinese steel imports weighed on the company.

The South African business of Luxembourg-based ArcelorMittal on Monday said steel production is anticipated to cease by late January and that its remaining production processes would be wound down by the first quarter of the year.

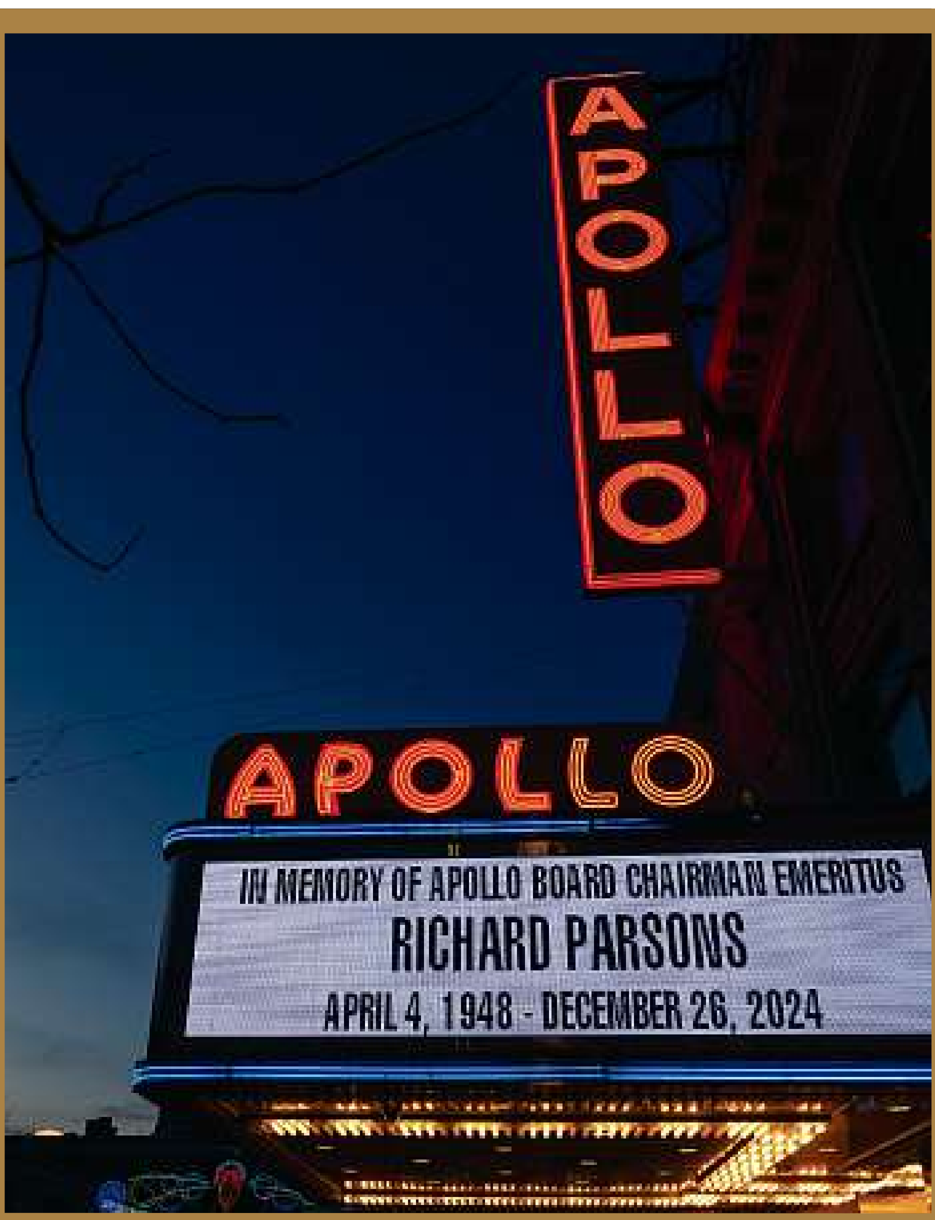
The business is unsustainable partly because of stubbornly high logistic and energy costs, the company said.

"The persistent overcapacity in the global and local markets, and unsustainably low international steel prices have further exacerbated the business' structural difficulties," it added.

The decision to wind the business down will directly affect the company's Newcastle and Vereeniging Works, and the ArcelorMittal Rail and Structural subsidiary, the company said.

ArcelorMittal South Africa's revenue for 2024 is expected to decline by more than 5% compared with 2023 and it said it anticipates a significant decline in earnings.

ArcelorMittal shares fell 0.7% on the New York Stock Exchange on Monday.



The Apollo mourns the passing of Richard D. Parsons,
our esteemed Chair Emeritus.

MR. PARSONS,

a titan of industry and dedicated philanthropist,
passed away on December 26, 2024, at the age of 76.

Mr. Parsons's leadership of The Apollo was transformative. When our future was uncertain, he stepped forward with unwavering resolve, securing our success for over two decades. He deeply understood our role as a global icon, inextricably linked to Harlem and our impact on New York City. His vision cemented our legacy as a cultural institution that has profoundly shaped how we see ourselves and each other.

Today, The Apollo thrives, providing a vital platform for artistic expression and community engagement. None of this would be possible without the foundation laid by Dick Parsons. He was a driving force behind our expansion, officiating the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Apollo Stages at the Victoria Theater and spearheading fundraising for the renovation of our Historic Theater.

Dick was more than just a Chairman; he was a beloved mentor to us all. He had a gift for bringing out the best in each person, making everyone feel valued and uniquely capable in their role. His love for music, his deep connection to Harlem, and his belief in the power of the arts to uplift and inspire New York City were at the core of his leadership. He understood what made New York, and indeed our country, great, and we join other cultural institutions in appreciating his profound contributions.

His leadership was defined by grace, wisdom, and an unwavering dedication to excellence. He led with a steady hand and a warm heart, always putting The Apollo first. He will be dearly missed.

On behalf of the entire Apollo family, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the Parsons family. We are forever grateful for his invaluable contributions and enduring legacy, which we will continue to honor through our commitment to the success of The Apollo for generations to come.

APOLLO

NEW HIGHS AND LOWS

WSJ.com/newhighs

The following explanations apply to the New York Stock Exchange, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market stocks that hit a new 52-week intraday high or low in the latest session. **% CHG**-Daily percentage change from the previous trading session.

Monday, January 6, 2025

Highs

Stock	Sym	52-Wk Hi/Lo	% Chg
Adtran	ADTN	9.88	7.0
ALT5Sigma	ALTS	5.89	6.9
ARKRestaurants	ARKR	16.56	10.0
ATIF	ZBAI	1.57	-3.1
AdaptiveBiotech	ADPT	7.46	-2.1
AdtalemGlbEduc	ATGE	97.37	-0.3
AEyeWt	LIDRW	0.24	60.1
AimfinityInvtI	AIMAU	12.99	0.5
Alico	ALCO	34.08	19.2
AligosTherap	ALGS	46.80	5.1
AllegiantTravel	ALGT	100.12	4.5
Allot	ALLT	7.15	6.0
AmerSports	AS	31.32	1.3
AmOutdoorBrands	AOUT	16.73	2.1
AmpriusTechWt	AMPX.WS	0.73	52.2
AnteroResources	AR	36.33	3.1
ArbeRoboticsWt	ARBEW	0.99	143.8
ArbeRobotics	ARBE	4.90	52.1
ArcherAviation	ACHR	11.80	-0.5
AresAcqnII	AACT.U	11.66	-0.9
argenx	ARGX	648.24	3.9
AristaNetworks	ANET	119.53	3.3
Arteris	AIP	12.64	0.2
AspenInsPfd	AHLpF	25.70	...
AsteraLabs	ALAB	147.39	1.9
Atomera	ATOM	17.55	...
aTyrPharma	ATYR	4.22	-0.3
BOS BetterOnln	BOSC	4.20	9.2
BancoBBVA	BBAR	24.29	4.5
Bladex	BLX	37.44	-0.9
BancoMacro	BMA	118.42	2.8
BitdeerTech	BTDR	26.99	-10.8
BlackBerry	BB	4.12	11.1
BlackSkyTechWt	BKSY.WS	0.27	40.7
BladeAirWt	BLDEW	0.59	11.5
Boxlight	BOXL	2.13	265.2
BridgelineDigital	BLIN	2.75	31.3
BrinkerIntl	EAT	142.47	-0.2
BrookfldBRP7.25Nt	BEPJ	25.93	-1.0
ButterflyNtwkWt	BFLY.WS	0.25	19.2
CEVA	CEVA	33.64	3.4
cbdMD PfdA	YCBDpA	0.96	-2.9
CedarRealtyPfC	CDRpC	15.12	0.9
Celestica	CLS	101.09	1.9
CentralPuerto	CEPU	16.60	-1.0
Ceragon	CRNT	5.63	15.9
Cerence	CRNC	27.50	4.4
ChartIndustries	GTLS	210.66	3.6
ChartIndsPfdB	GTLSpB	77.17	4.7
ChefsWarehouse	CHEF	50.96	-0.3
Chimerix	CMRX	3.80	-2.2
Citigroup	C	73.99	2.5
CoastalFinl	CCB	87.12	1.0
CollectiveMining	CNL	4.33	1.6
CoreCard	CCRD	24.97	-2.9
CPI Aero	CVU	4.78	7.9
CresudWt	CRESW	1.27	3.4
CyberArkSoftware	CYBR	348.24	1.9
DIH US Wt	DHAIW	0.13	45.7
DTCloudAcqn	DYCQ	10.45	0.1
DXP Ents	DXPE	86.64	-3.5
DefDlyTgt2XLgRIOT	RIOX	29.93	8.0
Digimarc	DMRC	48.23	1.0
DuosTechs	DUOT	8.53	4.0
DutchBros	BROS	58.96	2.5
EQVVenturesA	EQV	10.02	0.1
eHealth	EHTH	10.45	7.9
Electro-Sensors	ELSE	5.47	-1.9
electroCore	ECOR	18.67	3.6
Electromed	ELMD	31.88	1.8
Enerflex	EFXT	10.52	0.1
EnergyVault	NRGV	2.62	-2.4
EosEnergy	EOSE	6.01	-2.6
EpsilonEnergy	EPSN	6.75	0.2
ExcelerateEner	EE	32.26	0.2
ExpandEnergy	EXE	102.58	1.5
ExpandEnerWtA	EXEEW	96.21	7.3
51TalkOnlineEd	COE	20.95	2.6
FlexShopper	FPAY	2.30	31.9
Fortinet	FTNT	101.00	0.5
FreedomHolding	FRHC	135.23	-2.1
Frontier	ULCC	8.41	12.4
fuboTV	FUBO	5.30	251.4
Funko	FNKO	14.17	0.2
GCM Grosvenor	GCMG	12.86	-1.4
GCMGrosvenorWt	GCMGW	1.44	-1.4
GDS Holdings	GDS	26.20	5.6
GEE Group	JOB	0.51	28.4
GE Vernova	GEV	376.30	4.9
GSRIIIAcqn	GSRTU	10.06	0.2
GeneDx	WGS	89.66	13.2
GigaMedia	GIGM	1.77	13.7
GilatSatellite	GILT	6.79	9.8
GladstoneCap	GLAD	29.48	-0.3
Glaukos	GKOS	155.76	2.5
GlbBlockchainRt	GBBKR	0.14	-3.5
GlobalBlue	GB	8.00	0.9
GoHealth	GOCO	14.94	0.4
Graham	GHM	49.28	-4.0
GpoFinGalicia	GGAL	73.95	1.4
GpoSupervielle	SUPV	18.30	3.3
GuardforceAIWt	GFAIW	0.89	108.6
GulfportEnergy	GPOR	192.70	0.2
HashiCorp	HCP	34.40	-0.3
HorizonSpaceI	HSPO	11.72	-1.0
HubCyberSecurityWt	HUBCW	0.06	0.2
iClickInteract	ICLK	11.38	-7.3
InflectionPointII	IPXXU	15.50	5.1
InnSuitesHosp	IHT	2.59	15.4
InterDigital	IDCC	207.08	-0.8
IntuitiveMachineWt	LUNRW	10.95	-2.6
IntuitiveMachinesA	LUNR	22.32	-0.6
IonQ	IONQ	51.66	6.9
IonQWt	IONQ.WS	40.01	9.2
IturanLocation	ITRN	33.09	-2.7
JefferiesFinl	JEF	82.68	0.4
JobyAviation	JOBY	10.05	0.6
JobyAviationWt	JOBY.WS	2.59	7.5
Kaltura	KLTR	2.82	-7.2
Kamada	KMDA	6.72	2.9
KeenVisionAcqn	KVAC	11.00	0.2
Knowles	KN	20.74	0.8
KodiakGasSvcs	KGS	44.43	-0.2
KolibriGlblEnergy	KGEI	6.12	7.9
KratosDefense	KTOS	29.96	7.5
Kyndryl	KD	39.47	4.0
LPL Financial	LPLA	344.86	1.0
LightpathTech	LPTH	4.42	2.4
LisataTherap	LSTA	4.20	-3.6
MagicEmpire	MEGL	1.38	59.9
MaisonSolutions	MSS	2.08	34.6
Mannatech	MTEX	15.83	6.7
Marex	MRX	34.19	-3.0
MartiTech	MRT	3.65	1.1
MedicusPharmaWt	MDCXW	1.25	1.2
MesaLabs	MLAB	147.34	4.2
MicrobotMed	MBOT	3.38	32.7
Mobilicom	MOB	4.85	8.6
MobilicomWt	MOBBW	0.95	3.7
Myomo	MYO	6.99	3.6
NRX PharmWt	NRXPW	0.50	14.5
NSTS Bancorp	NSTS	12.05	0.4
NauticusRobotWt	KITTW	0.27	155.6
NextTrip	NTRP	8.50	2.1
NexxenIntl	NEXN	10.93	3.4
NovaMineralsWt	NVAWW	11.40	13.2
NovaMinerals	NVA	19.00	2.8
OceanPwrTech	OPTT	1.75	45.0
Oculis	OCS	18.10	0.5
Oklo	OKLO	31.66	10.1
Olo	OLO	8.35	-0.7
1895Bancorp	BCOW	10.69	5.1
OrlaMining	ORLA	6.05	-5.5
PampaEnergia	PAM	97.00	0.6
PaycorHCM	PYCR	23.49	23.3
PerfectWt	PERF.WS	0.14	39.8
PerpetuaRscs	PPTA	13.23	15.3
PlayaHotels	PLYA	12.81	-0.9
Pro-Dex	PDEX	59.60	23.0
ProPetro	PUMP	10.13	-0.6
ProtalixBio	PLX	2.36	5.2
RalphLauren	RL	243.66	3.6
RedCat	RCAT	15.27	7.5
Reddit	RDDT	187.69	1.0
Redwire	RDW	18.54	-3.5
RedwireWt	RDW.WS	7.69	-4.8
RegionalHealth	RHE	6.80	129.7
RegionalHlthPfdA	RHEpA	1.00	59.7
RemitlyGlobal	RELY	23.51	0.8
RigettiComp	RGTI	21.42	2.6
RigettiCompWt	RGTIW	9.79	1.1
RithmCapPfdC	RITMpC	24.95	...
Roblox	RBLX	62.42	2.4
RocketLab	RKLB	30.26	0.2
SES AI	SES	2.53	-7.6
SIMAcqnIWt	SIMAW	0.14	11.8
SIMAcqnIA	SIMA	10.06	0.1
SLM	SLM	28.91	0.1
SelectQuote	SLQT	4.55	-0.5
SiebertFin	SIEB	3.34	2.5
Similarweb	SMWB	14.88	2.4
Skillsoft	SKIL	27.48	2.0
Sportradar	SRAD	18.46	2.0
StabilisSolns	SLNG	7.15	-5.6
StarFashion	STFS	9.77	-0.5
SyprisSolutions	SYPR	3.72	15.1
TaiwanSemi	TSM	222.20	5.5
TakeTwoSoftware	TTWO	192.14	0.1
Tapestry	TPR	68.42	1.3
TelecomArgentina	TEO	15.17	...
Telesat	TSAT	19.37	7.6
TrailblazerI Rt	TBMCR	0.27	1.1
TranslationalDev	TDACU	10.05	0.1
TransportadGas	TGS	33.86	-0.3
TruBridge	TBRG	21.44	1.5
US Energy	USEG	1.93	17.0
USComdtyIndxFd	USCI	67.48	0.4
UrbanOutfitters	URBN	58.54	1.6
VyneTherap	VYNE	4.00	15.6
VeriSign	VRSN	212.10	2.5
Vuzix	VUZI	5.79	19.8
WarbyParker	WRBY	27.10	-0.5
WelsbachTech	WTMAU	14.50	1.9
Williams-Sonoma	WSM	200.56	4.0

Lows

Stock	Sym	52-Wk Hi/Lo	% Chg
AeonBiopharma	AEON	0.16	-63.1
AdvantageSolns	ADV	2.64	-6.7
Alexander's	ALX	190.91	-4.1
AlternusCleanEner	ALCE	0.58	-25.5
AmphastarPharm	AMPH	34.87	-2.4
ArdaghMetalPkg	AMBP	2.89	-2.7
ArtesianRscs A	ARTNA	30.27	-2.7
AstranaHealth	ASTH	31.12	-2.3
AvanosMedical	AVNS	15.51	0.6
BHP Group	BHP	48.43	-0.7
BicaraTherap	BCAX	15.54	-6.6
BioLineRX	BLRX	0.15	-40.9
BlueHatIntl	BHAT	0.08	-39.4
BriaCellTherap	BCTX	0.43	-28.5
BrookfieldNts2084	BIPJ	24.11	-0.7
Caleres	CAL	21.75	-0.2
Canoo	GOEV	1.24	-5.9
Celanese	CE	65.50	-0.1
CenturyComm	CCS	71.51	-1.3
CeriBell	CBLL	22.24	-7.2
CERoTherap	CERO	0.04	-27.3
Coca-Cola Femsa	KOF	75.90	0.5
CorebridgeFinNts	CRBD	25.13	-1.0
CrownCastle	CCI	88.26	-1.6
DigitalAlly	DGLY	0.43	-25.3
EdgewellPersonal	EPC	31.97	-1.7
FemtoTech	BCAN	7.15	-6.7
FlowersFoods	FLO	20.07	-3.1
FrontViewREIT	FVR	17.62	-1.5
GaotuTechedu	GOTU	2.10	-1.4
GeneralMills	GIS	61.45	-3.7
GlucoTrack	GCTK	0.14	-45.6
HainCelestial	HAIN	5.57	-9.5
Hershey	HSY	165.78	-1.4
Huntsman	HUN	16.92	...
ICF Intl	ICFI	115.06	-2.9
LandseaHomes	LSEA	8.03	-1.3
LunaInnov	LUNA	0.80	-56.6
Medifast	MED	16.56	-5.8
Mondelez	MDLZ	58.12	-2.7
Netstreit	NTST	13.72	-1.6
Olin	OLN	32.12	1.0
OneWaterMarine	ONEW	16.43	-2.4
PeabodyEnergy	BTU	19.44	-3.6
PepsiCo	PEP	146.10	-2.3
PostalRealty	PSTL	12.70	-1.8
RMR Group	RMR	19.90	-2.3
RainEnhTech	RAIN	4.40	-13.5
RealGoodFood	RGF	1.13	-65.2
RestaurantBrands	QSR	63.74	-1.6
ReynoldsCnsmr	REYN	25.88	-2.5
RocketCos.	RKT	10.67	-1.5
RoperTech	ROP	504.76	-1.5
SJW Group	SJW	47.05	-2.3
SonocoProducts	SON	47.18	-1.5
StaarSurgical	STAA	22.40	-4.9
StandardAero	SARO	23.61	-1.0
TNL Mediagene	TNMG	5.25	-6.1
Tronox	TROX	9.43	0.8
2seventybio	TSVT	2.62	-9.3
Vale	VALE	8.60	-0.1
WeRide	WRD	12.85	-5.6
WheelerREIT	WHLR	3.22	-4.1
XP	XP	11.37	-0.5
YorkWater	YORW	31.35	-3.1

Biggest 1,000 Stocks | WSJ.com/stocks

How to Read the Stock Tables

The following explanations apply to NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE American and Nasdaq Stock Market listed securities. Prices are consolidated from trades reported by various market centers, including securities exchanges, Finra, electronic communications networks and other broker-dealers. The list comprises the 1,000 largest companies based on market capitalization.

Underlined quotations are those stocks with large changes in volume compared with the issue's average trading volume.

Boldfaced quotations highlight those issues whose price changed by 5% or more if their previous closing price was $2 or higher.

Footnotes:
i-New 52-week high; **↓**-New 52-week low; **dd**-Indicates loss in the most recent four quarters.

Stock tables reflect composite regular trading as of 4 p.m. ET and changes in the official closing prices from 4 p.m. ET the previous day.

Monday, January 6, 2025

Mutual Funds

Data provided by LSEG

Top 250 mutual-funds listings for Nasdaq-published share classes by net assets.

e-Ex-distribution. **f**-Previous day's quotation. **g**-Footnotes x and s apply. **j**-Footnotes e and s apply. **k**-Recalculated by LSEG, using updated data. **p**-Distribution costs apply, 12b-1. **r**-Redemption charge may apply. **s**-Stock split or dividend. **t**-Footnotes p and r apply. **v**-Footnotes x and e apply. **x**-Ex-dividend. **z**-Footnote x, e and s apply. **NA**-Not available due to incomplete price, performance or cost data. **NE**-Not released by LSEG; data under review. **NN**-Fund not tracked. **NS**-Fund didn't exist at start of period.

Monday, January 6, 2025

MARKETS DIGEST

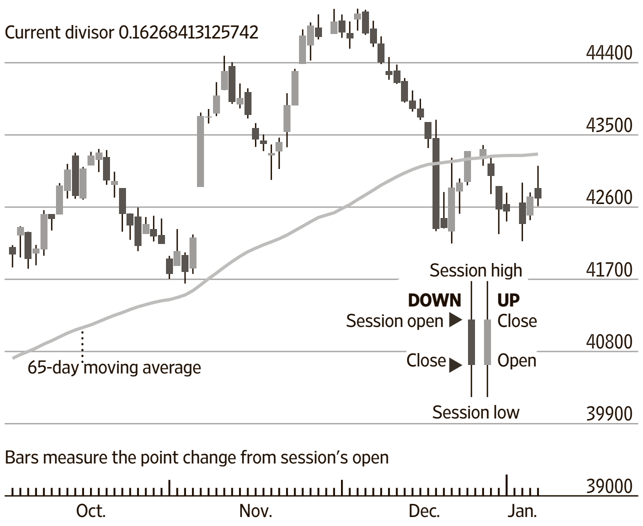
EQUITIES

Dow Jones Industrial Average

42706.56 ▼25.57, or 0.06%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio	26.84	26.71
P/E estimate *	21.78	20.67
Dividend yield	1.91	1.95
All-time high	45014.04, 12/04/24	

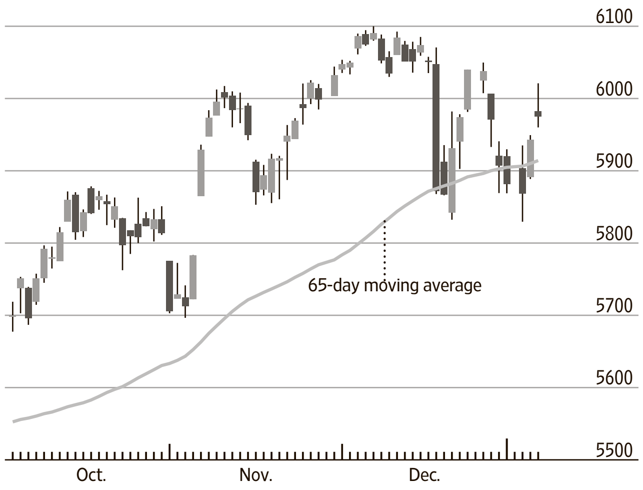


S&P 500 Index

5975.38 ▲32.91, or 0.55%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio *	24.68	22.33
P/E estimate *	21.42	21.24
Dividend yield *	1.26	1.51
All-time high	6090.27, 12/06/24	

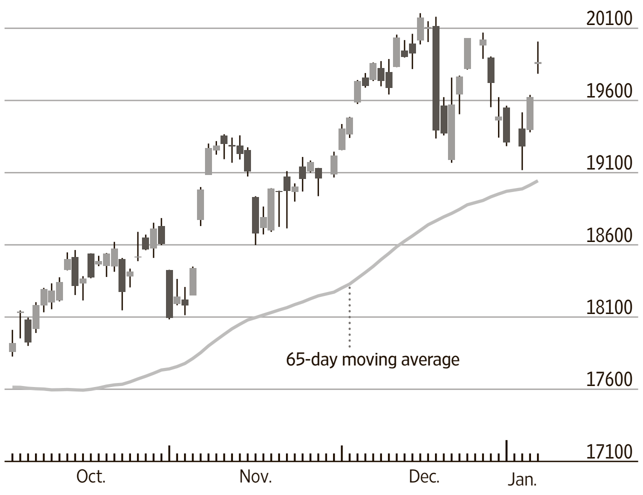


Nasdaq Composite Index

19864.98 ▲243.30, or 1.24%

High, low, open and close for each trading day of the past three months.

	Last	Year ago
Trailing P/E ratio *†	32.14	29.15
P/E estimate *†	26.37	27.95
Dividend yield *†	0.75	0.88
All-time high:	20173.89, 12/16/24	



*Weekly P/E data based on as-reported earnings from Birinyi Associates Inc.; †Based on Nasdaq-100 Index

Major U.S. Stock-Market Indexes

	High	Low	Latest Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	52-Week Low	% chg	YTD % chg	3-yr. ann.
Dow Jones										
Industrial Average	43115.31	42611.16	42706.56	-25.57	-0.06	45014.04	37266.67	13.3	0.4	5.6
Transportation Avg	16243.71	16006.69	16035.40	28.38	0.18	17754.38	14781.56	2.5	0.9	-0.6
Utility Average	1000.75	985.16	989.20	-13.05	-1.30	1079.88	829.38	9.3	0.7	0.9
Total Stock Market	59856.73	59258.03	59398.22	317.36	0.54	60836.59	47240.50	24.7	1.7	7.5
Barron's 400	1279.59	1266.01	1267.48	-1.48	-0.12	1356.99	1039.19	19.4	1.2	5.0
Nasdaq Stock Market										
Nasdaq Composite	20007.95	19785.00	19864.98	243.30	1.24	20173.89	14843.77	33.8	2.9	9.6
Nasdaq-100	21703.49	21462.52	21559.50	233.34	1.09	22096.66	16649.87	29.5	2.6	11.0
S&P										
500 Index	6021.04	5960.01	5975.38	32.91	0.55	6090.27	4739.21	25.4	1.6	8.4
MidCap 400	3191.26	3152.57	3156.37	4.23	0.13	3390.26	2691.79	14.9	1.1	3.9
SmallCap 600	1436.95	1418.56	1420.41	-1.81	-0.13	1544.66	1241.62	10.0	0.9	0.5
Other Indexes										
Russell 2000	2292.30	2264.42	2266.65	-1.83	-0.08	2442.03	1913.17	14.0	1.6	0.9
NYSE Composite	19426.84	19236.48	19261.42	7.13	0.04	20272.04	16522.83	14.1	0.9	3.9
Value Line	624.45	616.92	618.14	1.22	0.20	656.04	566.64	5.6	1.2	-2.6
NYSE Arca Biotech	5884.56	5818.76	5845.64	25.31	0.43	6154.34	4861.76	6.1	1.7	3.5
NYSE Arca Pharma	943.00	933.24	934.94	-5.79	-0.62	1140.17	928.89	-1.8	0.1	5.1
KBW Bank	131.89	129.45	129.84	1.00	0.77	138.78	91.80	33.2	1.9	-3.2
PHLX§ Gold/Silver	142.64	140.00	140.09	-1.37	-0.97	175.74	102.94	16.2	2.1	4.3
PHLX§ Oil Service	76.29	74.35	74.57	-0.17	-0.23	95.25	68.88	-8.1	2.7	7.8
PHLX§ Semiconductor	5381.04	5283.39	5310.14	146.49	2.84	5904.54	4048.84	30.7	6.6	10.8
Cboe Volatility	16.87	15.71	16.04	-0.09	-0.56	38.57	11.86	22.6	-7.6	-6.5

§Nasdaq PHLX

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Late Trading

Most-active and biggest movers among NYSE, NYSE Arca, NYSE Amer. and Nasdaq issues from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. ET as reported by electronic trading services, securities dealers and regional exchanges. Minimum share price of $2 and minimum after-hours volume of 50,000 shares.

Most-active issues in late trading

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	Last	Net chg	After Hours % chg	High	Low
fuboTV	FUBO	26,898.3	5.87	0.81	16.00	5.92	4.86
Comcast Cl A	CMCSA	9,101.6	37.38	-0.11	-0.29	37.52	37.36
NVIDIA	NVDA	7,961.8	150.37	0.94	0.63	151.78	140.76
Full Truck Alliance ADR	YMM	6,653.7	10.61	...	unch.	10.70	10.52
Apple	AAPL	6,177.2	244.69	-0.31	-0.13	245.00	229.25
Warner Bros. Discovery A	WBD	6,037.4	10.63	-0.20	-1.85	10.87	10.63
Pfizer	PFE	6,034.3	26.85	-0.04	-0.15	26.93	26.64
VICI Properties	VICI	5,815.4	29.80	0.24	0.81	29.85	29.45

Percentage gainers…

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	Last	Net chg	After Hours % chg	High	Low
Inari Medical	NARI	4,984.0	79.00	14.00	21.54	83.19	64.11
fuboTV	FUBO	26,898.3	5.87	0.81	16.00	5.92	4.86
CCC Intelligent Solns	CCCS	50.1	12.48	1.07	9.36	12.48	11.41
DIH Holdings US	DHAI	820.4	3.14	0.22	7.53	3.56	2.80
Enovix	ENVX	450.5	13.23	0.77	6.18	13.28	12.35

…And losers

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	Last	Net chg	After Hours % chg	High	Low
ACELYRIN	SLRN	494.9	2.91	-0.58	-16.62	4.19	2.73
Regional Hlth Properties	RHE	162.8	3.22	-0.34	-9.55	3.43	3.10
Denali Therapeutics	DNLI	108.9	18.10	-1.72	-8.68	20.18	12.91
SPDR Bloomberg Conv Secs	CWB	110.7	75.06	-4.47	-5.62	79.53	75.06
Brookdale Senior Living	BKD	159.1	4.75	-0.25	-5.00	5.00	4.75

Trading Diary

Volume, Advancers, Decliners

	NYSE	NYSE Amer.
Total volume*	1,048,782,964	28,376,793
Adv. volume*	575,361,205	13,756,702
Decl. volume*	464,544,912	14,566,607
Issues traded	2,847	300
Advances	1,197	134
Declines	1,574	157
Unchanged	76	9
New highs	68	14
New lows	32	1
Closing Arms†	0.45	0.54
Block trades*	5,077	260

	Nasdaq	NYSE Arca
Total volume*	9,586,843,373	302,944,381
Adv. volume*	6,563,061,512	165,110,511
Decl. volume*	2,942,082,734	132,695,191
Issues traded	4,509	2,124
Advances	2,281	1,377
Declines	2,077	704
Unchanged	151	43
New highs	146	39
New lows	55	24
Closing Arms†	0.49	1.58
Block trades*	84,440	1,322

* Primary market NYSE, NYSE American NYSE Arca only.
†(TRIN) A comparison of the number of advancing and declining issues with the volume of shares rising and falling. An Arms of less than 1 indicates buying demand; above 1 indicates selling pressure.

International Stock Indexes

Region/Country	Index	Close	Net chg	Latest % chg	YTD % chg
World	MSCI ACWI	852.90	5.68	0.67	1.4
	MSCI ACWI ex-USA	328.12	2.83	0.87	0.7
	MSCI World	3763.15	25.65	0.69	1.5
	MSCI Emerging Markets	1078.89	5.68	0.53	0.3
Americas	MSCI AC Americas	2249.47	12.82	0.57	1.7
Canada	S&P/TSX Comp	24999.79	-73.75	-0.29	1.1
Latin Amer.	MSCI EM Latin America	1880.46	37.87	2.06	1.5
Brazil	Bovespa	120021.52	1488.84	1.26	-0.2
Chile	S&P IPSA	3649.33	41.06	1.14	1.0
Mexico	S&P/BMV IPC	49493.56	536.32	1.10	-0.04
EMEA	STOXX Europe 600	513.02	4.83	0.95	1.1
Eurozone	Euro STOXX	513.04	9.72	1.93	1.5
Belgium	Bel-20	4284.41	25.28	0.59	0.5
Denmark	OMX Copenhagen 20	2101.65	-40.24	-1.88	-0.03
France	CAC 40	7445.69	163.47	2.24	0.9
Germany	DAX	20216.19	310.11	1.56	1.5
Israel	Tel Aviv	2456.44	26.64	1.10	2.6
Italy	FTSE MIB	34780.81	653.19	1.91	1.7
Netherlands	AEX	891.56	6.97	0.79	1.5
Norway	Oslo Bors All-Share	1690.70	-2.44	-0.14	2.8
South Africa	FTSE/JSE All-Share	84745.52	33.72	0.04	0.8
Spain	IBEX 35	11808.20	156.60	1.34	1.8
Sweden	OMX Stockholm	964.58	...	Closed	1.0
Switzerland	Swiss Market	11691.13	67.11	0.58	0.8
Turkey	BIST 100	10085.50	10.33	0.10	2.6
U.K.	FTSE 100	8249.66	25.68	0.31	0.9
U.K.	FTSE 250	20612.65	21.25	0.10	-0.05
Asia-Pacific	MSCI AC Asia Pacific	181.33	-0.04	-0.02	-0.2
Australia	S&P/ASX 200	8257.40	6.91	0.08	1.2
China	Shanghai Composite	3206.92	-4.51	-0.14	-4.3
Hong Kong	Hang Seng	19688.29	-71.98	-0.36	-1.9
India	BSE Sensex	77964.99	-1258.12	-1.59	-0.2
Japan	NIKKEI 225	39307.05	-587.49	-1.47	-1.5
Singapore	Straits Times	3821.84	20.01	0.53	0.9
South Korea	KOSPI	2488.64	46.72	1.91	3.7
Taiwan	TAIEX	23547.71	639.41	2.79	2.2
Thailand	SET	1372.65	-12.11	-0.87	-2.0

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

Percentage Gainers…

Company	Symbol	Latest Session Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg
Arbe Robotics	ARBE	4.00	1.37	52.09	4.90	1.40	88.7
PTL	PTLE	10.17	2.78	37.62	12.84	2.01	...
Sagimet Biosciences	SGMT	6.78	1.81	36.42	20.71	2.39	32.4
Microbot Medical	MBOT	2.84	0.70	32.71	3.38	0.82	108.8
AtlasClear Holdings	ATCH	10.75	2.60	31.90	615.60	7.42	-97.5
ZJK Industrial	ZJK	12.01	2.90	31.83	30.50	4.00	...
Baosheng Media	BAOS	4.26	1.01	31.08	13.66	1.44	12.7
Inari Medical	NARI	65.00	15.23	30.60	65.94	36.73	-0.9
NRX Pharmaceuticals	NRXP	3.51	0.82	30.48	7.33	1.10	-19.5
iRobot	IRBT	12.70	2.79	28.15	38.36	5.83	-66.4
Virax Biolabs	VRAX	3.11	0.68	27.98	9.00	0.60	159.2
Nauticus Robotics	KITT	4.86	1.06	27.89	23.79	0.82	-63.3
Luminar Technologies	LAZR	8.48	1.82	27.33	53.48	4.93	-82.9
Zenvia Cl A	ZENV	2.82	0.59	26.46	3.88	1.00	136.8
Nukkleus	NUKK	28.15	5.65	25.11	78.32	1.30	69.9

Percentage Losers

Company	Symbol	Latest Session Close	Net chg	% chg	52-Week High	Low	% chg
Real Good Food	RGF	1.25	-2.34	-65.16	19.32	1.13	-93.3
Luna Innovations	LUNA	0.89	-1.16	-56.63	7.92	0.80	-87.1
Aptorum Group	APM	1.61	-0.53	-24.77	17.49	0.46	-27.5
N2OFF	NITO	1.99	-0.65	-24.62	3.49	0.16	-7.4
Intrusion	INTZ	3.17	-1.03	-24.52	7.34	0.35	-35.8
Zeo Energy	ZEO	2.59	-0.84	-24.49	11.60	1.05	-77.0
Faraday Future	FFIE	2.41	-0.77	-24.21	156.00	0.99	-89.4
Defiance Dly Tgt 2x Sh	SMST	4.35	-1.33	-23.42	118.40	3.47	...
Jayud Global Logistics	JYD	2.43	-0.70	-22.36	3.49	0.42	102.5
Iveda Solutions	IVDA	4.57	-1.03	-18.39	10.16	1.27	-13.4
Surrozen	SRZN	14.23	-2.79	-16.39	18.17	6.00	40.1
Bluejay Diagnostics	BJDX	3.73	-0.73	-16.37	188.51	3.03	-93.6
Gorilla Technology Group	GRRR	19.71	-3.81	-16.20	25.88	2.09	245.8
NextNav	NN	13.51	-2.61	-16.17	18.54	3.55	191.7
Ambow Education ADR	AMBO	2.36	-0.43	-15.41	6.30	1.00	79.2

Most Active Stocks

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	Low
XTI Aerospace	XTIA	1,274,772	1426.8	0.09	112.56	7.99	0.04
fuboTV	FUBO	653,537	5899.7	5.06	251.39	5.30	1.10
NVIDIA	NVDA	262,675	19.1	149.43	3.43	152.89	49.48
CNS Pharmaceuticals	CNSP	243,183	1325.9	0.12	-3.41	61.00	0.10
Boxlight Cl A	BOXL	239,184	305667.8	1.68	265.22	2.13	0.30
GEE Group	JOB	190,256	74778.1	0.28	28.43	0.51	0.20
SciSparc	SPRC	190,230	3982.6	1.07	102.69	6.78	0.20
Plug Power	PLUG	142,316	150.0	3.15	19.77	5.14	1.60
Rigetti Computing	RGTI	131,410	66.4	19.51	2.58	21.42	0.66
Arbe Robotics	ARBE	128,035	33420.4	4.00	52.09	4.90	1.40

* Volumes of 100,000 shares or more are rounded to the nearest thousand

Volume Movers

Ranked by change from 65-day average*

Company	Symbol	Volume (000)	% chg from 65-day avg	Latest Session Close	% chg	52-Week High	Low
Femto Technologies	BCAN	508	3977	7.41	-6.72	1176.04	7.15
First Tr Expanded Tech	XPND	149	2701	30.99	0.61	31.70	22.78
Alico	ALCO	845	2311	31.39	19.22	34.08	24.14
OneAscent Emg Mkts	OAEM	398	1841	29.94	0.42	31.60	27.30
Invsc DW Utils Mntm	PUI	154	1823	38.85	-1.24	42.78	30.23
Fidelity Enhanced SC	FESM	4,407	1666	32.97	0.12	36.13	26.60
OneAscent LC Core ETF	OALC	301	1413	30.23	0.50	31.11	24.57
Defiance Targt 2X Lg RIOT	RIOX	161	1373	29.39	8.01	29.93	20.31
Inari Medical	NARI	12,965	1282	65.00	30.60	65.94	36.73
Colombier Acqn II Cl A	CLBR	2,342	1272	11.20	-5.00	12.28	9.16

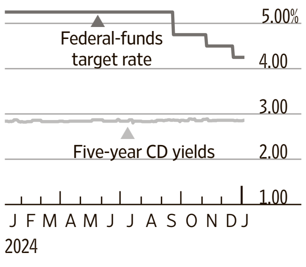
* Common stocks priced at $2 a share or more with an average volume over 65 trading days of at least 5,000 shares †Has traded fewer than 65 days

CREDIT MARKETS

Consumer Rates and Returns to Investor

U.S. consumer rates

A consumer rate against its benchmark over the past year



Selected rates

5-year CDs

Bankrate.com avg†:	2.86%
KS StateBank	4.00%
Manhattan, KS	785-587-4000
Synchrony Bank	4.00%
Draper, UT	800-677-0718
GTE Financial Credit Union	4.07%
Tampa, FL	888-871-2690
America First FCU	4.25%
Riverdale, UT	801-627-0900
Popular Direct	4.25%
Miami Lakes, FL	800-274-5696

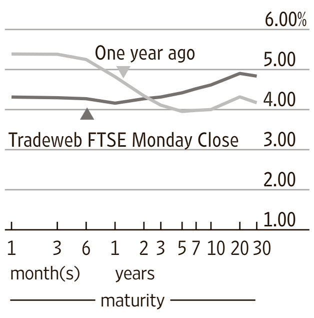
Interest rate	Yield/Rate (%) Last	Week ago	52-Week Range (%) Low	High	3-yr chg (pct pts)
Federal-funds rate target	4.25-4.50	4.25-4.50	4.25	5.50	4.25
Prime rate*	7.50	7.50	7.50	8.50	4.25
SOFR	4.31	4.46	4.30	5.40	4.26
Money market, annual yield	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.51	0.34
Five-year CD, annual yield	2.86	2.85	2.80	2.89	2.44
30-year mortgage, fixed†	7.34	7.34	6.69	7.72	4.02
15-year mortgage, fixed†	6.68	6.72	6.02	7.11	4.08
Jumbo mortgages, $806,500-plus†	7.40	7.39	6.78	7.79	4.06
Five-year adj mortgage (ARM)†	6.51	6.52	5.88	6.78	3.66
New-car loan, 48-month	7.27	7.27	7.18	7.94	3.86

Bankrate.com rates based on survey of over 4,800 online banks. *Base rate posted by 70% of the nation's largest banks.† Excludes closing costs.

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data; Bankrate.com

Treasury yield curve

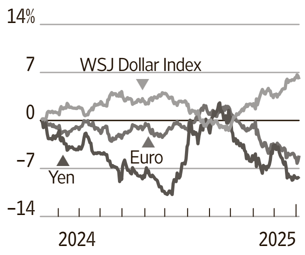
Yield to maturity of current bills, notes and bonds



Sources: Tradeweb FTSE U.S. Treasury Close; Tullett Prebon; Dow Jones Market Data

Forex Race

Yen, euro vs. dollar; dollar vs. major U.S. trading partners



Corporate Borrowing Rates and Yields

Bond total return index	Close	Yield (%) Last	Week ago	52-Week High	Low	Total Return (%) 52-wk	3-yr
U.S. Treasury, Bloomberg	2186.420	4.490	4.440	4.880	3.630	1.443	−2.483
U.S. Treasury Long, Bloomberg	3016.720	4.910	4.840	4.910	3.990	−4.473	−11.121
Aggregate, Bloomberg	2084.470	4.950	4.890	5.310	4.100	2.268	−2.062
Fixed-Rate MBS, Bloomberg	2058.130	5.310	5.250	5.570	4.340	2.257	−1.929
High Yield 100, ICE BofA	3808.714	6.715	6.803	7.871	6.208	8.614	3.370
Muni Master, ICE BofA	595.742	3.438	3.459	3.760	3.059	1.250	−0.232
EMBI Global, J.P. Morgan	899.177	7.577	7.647	8.073	7.084	8.257	−0.235

Sources: J.P. Morgan; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; ICE Data Services

CURRENCIES & COMMODITIES

Currencies

U.S.-dollar foreign-exchange rates in late New York trading

Country/currency	Mon in US$	Mon per US$	US$ vs, YTD chg (%)
Americas			
Argentina peso	.0010	1034.8498	0.4
Brazil real	.1635	6.1157	-1.1
Canada dollar	.6978	1.4332	-0.4
Chile peso	.000989	1011.08	1.7
Colombia peso	.000230	4340.00	-1.5
Ecuador US dollar	1	1	unch
Mexico peso	.0492	20.3249	-2.4
Uruguay peso	.02274	43.9850	0.7
Asia-Pacific			
Australia dollar	.6245	1.6013	-0.9
China yuan	.1366	7.3225	0.3
Hong Kong dollar	.1286	7.7755	0.1
India rupee	.01166	85.735	0.2
Indonesia rupiah	.0000619	16168	-0.6
Japan yen	.006343	157.65	0.3
Kazakhstan tenge	.001892	528.50	0.7
Macau pataca	.1248	8.0130	0.1
Malaysia ringgit	.2217	4.5110	0.9
New Zealand dollar	.5643	1.7721	-0.9
Pakistan rupee	.00359	278.500	0.04
Philippines peso	.0172	58.060	-0.04
Singapore dollar	.7335	1.3633	-0.1
South Korea won	.0006834	1463.17	-1.0
Sri Lanka rupee	.0033785	295.99	1.0
Taiwan dollar	.03051	32.774	-0.1
Thailand baht	.02890	34.600	0.8
Vietnam dong	.00003940	25380	-0.4
Europe			
Czech Rep. koruna	.04130	24.213	-0.6
Denmark krone	.1393	7.1786	-0.3
Euro area euro	1.0391	.9624	-0.3
Hungary forint	.002497	400.50	0.8
Iceland krona	.007160	139.66	0.5
Norway krone	.0885	11.2933	-0.8
Poland zloty	.2443	4.0941	-0.9
Sweden krona	.0905	11.0475	-0.2
Switzerland franc	1.1056	.9045	-0.3
Turkey lira	.0283	35.3032	-0.1
Ukraine hryvnia	.0236	42.3500	0.7
UK pound	1.2521	.7987	-0.1
Middle East/Africa			
Bahrain dinar	2.6529	.3769	-0.04
Egypt pound	.0197	50.6468	-0.4
Israel shekel	.2755	3.6299	-0.3
Kuwait dinar	3.2420	.3085	0.05
Oman sul rial	2.5974	.3850	...
Qatar rial	.2743	3.646	0.01
Saudi Arabia riyal	.2664	3.7545	-0.1
South Africa rand	.0538	18.5778	-1.6

	Close	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg
WSJ Dollar Index	102.54	−0.46	−0.44	−0.21

Sources: Tullett Prebon, Dow Jones Market Data

Commodities

	Close	Monday Net chg	% Chg	52-Week High	Low	% Chg	YTD % chg
DJ Commodity	1028.95	8.99	0.88	1079.94	936.12	8.65	0.64
FTSE/CC CRB Index	298.93	2.16	0.73	300.23	261.65	14.25	0.75
Crude oil, $ per barrel	73.56	-0.40	-0.54	86.91	65.75	3.94	2.57
Natural gas, $/MMBtu	3.672	0.318	9.48	3.946	1.575	23.22	1.07
Gold, $ per troy oz.	2638.40	-6.60	-0.25	2788.50	1990.30	30.19	0.35

COMMODITIES

wsj.com/market-data/commodities

Futures Contracts

Metal & Petroleum Futures

	Open	High	Contract hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Copper-High (CMX)-25,000 lbs.; $ per lb.							
Jan	4.1150	4.1620	▲	4.0395	**4.1270**	0.0875	2,803
March	4.0765	4.2005	▲	4.0585	**4.1615**	0.0880	124,825
Gold (CMX)-100 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Jan	2645.50	2647.00	▼	2617.30	**2638.40**	−6.60	1,667
Feb	2652.80	2663.80	▼	2624.60	**2647.40**	−7.30	329,966
March	2665.00	2673.20	▼	2638.90	**2659.40**	−7.10	65
April	2677.60	2688.00	▼	2649.90	**2672.00**	−7.50	71,937
June	2702.10	2712.10	▼	2673.20	**2695.70**	−8.20	36,696
Aug	2714.50	2732.40	▼	2696.80	**2718.10**	−8.60	14,787
Palladium (NYM) - 50 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Jan	893.50	893.50	▼	882.00	**909.60**	−6.00	1
March	920.00	945.00	▲	911.00	**916.40**	−6.10	19,638
Platinum (NYM)-50 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Jan	930.70	936.20	▲	930.00	**929.30**	−5.30	21
April	944.90	963.40	▲	938.10	**942.80**	−5.50	81,310
Silver (CMX)-5,000 troy oz.; $ per troy oz.							
Jan	30.370	30.460	▲	29.960	**30.342**	0.536	379
March	30.095	30.960	▲	29.875	**30.583**	0.518	120,022
Crude Oil, Light Sweet (NYM)-1,000 bbls.; $ per bbl.							
Feb	74.05	74.99	▲	73.20	**73.56**	−0.40	310,913
March	73.31	74.18	▲	72.54	**72.92**	−0.29	274,226
April	72.75	73.56	▲	72.03	**72.40**	−0.25	143,919
June	71.86	72.63	▲	71.26	**71.63**	−0.15	176,338
Sept	70.62	71.32	▲	70.14	**70.50**	−0.05	100,936
Dec	69.44	70.14	▲	69.05	**69.42**	0.03	164,242
NY Harbor ULSD (NYM)-42,000 gal.; $ per gal.							
Feb	2.3552	2.3956	▲	2.3402	**2.3552**	.0074	109,318
March	2.3365	2.3738	▲	2.3214	**2.3353**	.0050	69,540
Gasoline-NY RBOB (NYM)-42,000 gal.; $ per gal.							
Feb	2.0544	2.0805	▲	2.0270	**2.0355**	−.0182	107,268
March	2.0774	2.1034	▲	2.0509	**2.0578**	−.0178	75,650
Natural Gas (NYM)-10,000 MMBtu.; $ per MMBtu.							
Feb	3.554	3.726		3.502	**3.672**	.318	148,478
March	3.064	3.149		3.041	**3.112**	.163	295,329
April	3.041	3.118		3.029	**3.088**	.139	109,580
May	3.139	3.204		3.116	**3.176**	.121	123,801
Oct	3.595	3.644		3.581	**3.621**	.095	115,574
Jan'26	4.601	4.650		4.590	**4.616**	.064	105,890

Agriculture Futures

	Open	High	Contract hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Corn (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	451.50	460.25	▲	451.50	**457.75**	7.00	726,805
May	458.75	467.25		458.75	**465.25**	7.00	303,542
Oats (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	324.25	336.00	▲▼	322.00	**331.00**	8.75	3,779
May	336.25	345.00	▲▼	333.50	**341.75**	8.75	393
Soybeans (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
Jan	982.75	997.50		982.75	**992.50**	11.50	919
March	993.75	1009.75		993.25	**997.75**	6.00	394,812
Soybean Meal (CBT)-100 tons; $ per ton.							
Jan	303.30	304.70	▼	297.80	**298.60**	−1.30	991
March	310.00	314.40		306.30	**307.30**	−1.30	260,895
Soybean Oil (CBT)-60,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Jan	39.92	40.34	▲	39.73	**39.76**	.36	446
March	39.99	40.98	▲	39.87	**40.33**	.40	280,876
Rough Rice (CBT)-2,000 cwt.; $ per cwt.							
Jan	13.85	13.89		13.85	**13.85**	.01	279
March	13.94	14.06	▼	13.89	**13.90**	−.03	11,262
Wheat (CBT)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	530.25	543.75		530.25	**540.50**	11.25	266,751
May	541.50	555.25		541.50	**552.50**	11.50	90,063
Wheat (KC)-5,000 bu.; cents per bu.							
March	540.00	555.50		538.75	**553.25**	14.25	169,462
May	547.75	563.75		547.75	**561.75**	14.50	49,975
Cattle-Feeder (CME)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Jan	265.775	267.100		265.250	**266.300**	1.475	11,152
March	264.600	266.800		264.375	**265.550**	1.375	31,190
Cattle-Live (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Feb	194.700	196.325	▲	194.600	**195.200**	1.150	137,737
April	196.550	197.725		196.250	**197.275**	1.275	105,989
Hogs-Lean (CME)-40,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Feb	80.750	81.125	▼	79.325	**79.650**	−1.125	100,472
April	85.725	86.325	▼	84.975	**85.875**	.100	86,494
Lumber (CME)-27,500 bd. ft., $ per 1,000 bd. ft.							
Jan	546.00	556.00	▲	545.00	**550.50**	8.00	1,088
March	571.50	581.00		570.00	**575.00**	5.50	5,288
Milk (CME)-200,000 lbs., cents per lb.							
Jan	20.42	20.64	▲	20.42	**20.64**	.19	4,682
Feb	20.57	21.14	▲	20.55	**21.12**	.55	4,697
Cocoa (ICE-US)-10 metric tons; $ per ton.							
March	11,423	11,882	▲	11,066	**11,377**	139	47,689
May	10,873	11,274	▲	10,515	**10,831**	146	38,648
Coffee (ICE-US)-37,500 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	318.65	328.60	▼	317.05	**318.60**	−.05	91,982
May	314.90	324.30	▼	314.00	**315.50**	.60	42,630
Sugar-World (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	19.69	19.80		19.30	**19.33**	−.32	352,812
May	18.29	18.41		17.95	**18.00**	−.27	200,004
Sugar-Domestic (ICE-US)-112,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	36.99	36.99	▼	36.99	**36.99**	...	3,068
Cotton (ICE-US)-50,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
March	67.76	68.75		67.76	**68.68**	1.02	134,825
May	69.43	69.87		68.91	**69.82**	1.01	48,096
Orange Juice (ICE-US)-15,000 lbs.; cents per lb.							
Jan	525.00	525.00	▲	525.00	**526.15**	20.20	290
March	500.80	507.50	▲	499.80	**506.80**	7.90	9,879

Interest Rate Futures

	Open	High	Contract hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Ultra Treasury Bonds (CBT) - $100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	118-110	118-220		117-160	**117-290**	−14.0	1,769,524
Treasury Bonds (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	113-150	113-240		112-260	**113-040**	−13.0	1,923,103
June	113-050	113-180		112-220	**112-310**	−14.0	1,343
Treasury Notes (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	108-190	108-255		108-105	**108-170**	−3.5	4,559,292
June	108-160	108-240		108-100	**108-160**	−3.5	492
5 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-$100,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	106-050	106-107		106-020	**106-055**	−1.5	6,181,267
2 Yr. Treasury Notes (CBT)-$200,000; pts 32nds of 100%							
March	102-231	102-260		102-225	**102-244**	.5	4,303,841
June	102-300	103-007		103-007	**102-307**	.5	11
30 Day Federal Funds (CBT)-$5,000,000; 100 - daily avg.							
Jan	95.6725	95.6725	▲▼	95.6700	**95.6700**		524,785
Feb	95.6950	95.7000	▲▼	95.6850	**95.6900**	−.0050	494,303
Three-Month SOFR (CME)-$1,000,000; 100 - daily avg.							
Oct	95.3900	95.3900	▲	95.3875	**95.3900**	.0025	9,528
March'25	95.8050	95.8200	▼	95.7950	**95.8050**	−.0050	1,129,943

Currency Futures

	Open	High	Contract hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Japanese Yen (CME)-¥12,500,000; $ per 100¥							
Jan	.6356	.6404	▲▼	.6341	**.6352**	−.0016	1,082
March	.6410	.6453	▲▼	.6383	**.6399**	−.0015	200,459
Canadian Dollar (CME)-CAD 100,000; $ per CAD							
Jan	.6927	.7004	▲	.6923	**.6977**	.0053	1,244
March	.6941	.7021	▲	.6939	**.6993**	.0054	351,986
British Pound (CME)-£62,500; $ per £							
Jan	1.2425	1.2550	▲	1.2418	**1.2511**	.0085	626
March	1.2413	1.2545	▲	1.2411	**1.2506**	.0085	187,600
Swiss Franc (CME)-CHF 125,000; $ per CHF							
March	1.1081	1.1187	▲	1.1069	**1.1142**	.0055	91,343
June	1.1299	1.1302	▲	1.1190	**1.1258**	.0054	113
Australian Dollar (CME)-AUD 100,000; $ per AUD							
Jan	.6215	.6302	▲	.6214	**.6241**	.0025	888
March	.6212	.6303	▲	.6211	**.6242**	.0025	180,504
Mexican Peso (CME)-MXN 500,000; $ per MXN							
Jan	.04854	.04926	▲	.04840	**.04916**	.00085	92
March	.04785	.04880	▲	.04780	**.04862**	.00083	140,296
Euro (CME)-€125,000; $ per €							
Jan	1.0307	1.0437	▲	1.0299	**1.0391**	.0086	4,141
March	1.0335	1.0469	▲	1.0327	**1.0419**	.0086	591,594

Index Futures

	Open	High	Contract hi lo	Low	Settle	Chg	Open interest
Mini DJ Industrial Average (CBT)-$5 x index							
March	43024	43409	▲	42886	**42982**	−39	84,244
June	43500	43763	▲	43255	**43342**	−44	290
Mini S&P 500 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	5994.50	6068.25	▲	5980.75	**6020.50**	31.00	2,061,748
June	6050.50	6124.25	▲	6037.00	**6077.00**	31.75	7,419
Mini S&P Midcap 400 (CME)-$100 x index							
March	3178.20	3214.20	▲	3168.80	**3178.80**	5.30	48,930
June	...	3232.30	▲	3207.20	**3200.10**	5.30	n.a.
Mini Nasdaq 100 (CME)-$20 x index							
March	21532.25	21896.75	▲	21478.25	**21744.50**	228.00	250,409
June	21761.75	22128.25	▲	21714.50	**21977.25**	227.50	1,439
Mini Russell 2000 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	2286.90	2313.60	▲	2277.60	**2282.60**	−.80	465,101
June	2298.80	2333.40	▲	2298.50	**2303.00**	−.70	384
Mini Russell 1000 (CME)-$50 x index							
March	3319.40	3325.00	▲	3285.70	**3298.20**	14.80	5,626
U.S. Dollar Index (ICE-US)-$1,000 x index							
March	108.78	108.91	▼	107.58	**108.10**	−.70	45,358
June	108.58	108.58	▼	107.26	**107.75**	−.69	400

Source: FactSet

Cash Prices | wsj.com/market-data/commodities

Monday, January 6, 2025

These prices reflect buying and selling of a variety of actual or "physical" commodities in the marketplace—separate from the futures price on an exchange, which reflects what the commodity might be worth in future months.

	Monday
Energy	
Coal,C.Aplc.,12500Btu,1.2SO2-r,w	75.000
Coal,PwdrRvrBsn,8800Btu,0.8SO2-r,w	14.200
Metals	
Gold, per troy oz	
Engelhard industrial	2628.00
Handy & Harman base	2633.35
Handy & Harman fabricated	2923.02
LBMA Gold Price AM	*2654.30
LBMA Gold Price PM	*2646.80
Krugerrand,wholesale-e	2740.30
Maple Leaf-e	2766.65
American Eagle-e	2766.65
Mexican peso-e	3184.90
Austria crown-e	2585.73
Austria phil-e	2766.65
Silver, troy oz.	
Engelhard industrial	30.1000
Handy & Harman base	30.1550
Handy & Harman fabricated	37.6940
LBMA spot price	*£24.0300
(U.S.$ equivalent)	*29.8150
Coins,wholesale $1,000 face-a	22923
Other metals	
LBMA Platinum Price PM	*941.0
LBMA Palladium Price PM	*931.0
Platinum,Engelhard industrial	943.0
Palladium,Engelhard industrial	946.0
Aluminum, LME, $ per metric ton	*2475.0
Copper,Comex spot	4.1270
Iron Ore, 62% Fe CFR China-s	*98.8
Steel, HRC USA, FOB Midwest Mill-s	*690.0
Battery/EV metals	
BMI Lithium Carbonate, EXW China, =99.5%-v,w	10325
BMI Lithium Hydroxide, EXW China, =56.5% -v,w	9425
BMI Cobalt sulphate, EXW China, >20.5% -v,m	3528
BMI Nickel Sulphate, EXW China, >22%-v,m	3520
BMI Flake Graphite, FOB China, -100 Mesh, 94-95% -v,m	435
Fibers and Textiles	
Burlap,10-oz,40-inch NY yd-n,w	0.8500
Cotton,1 1/16 std lw-mdMphs-u	0.6618
Cotlook 'A' Index-t	*79.05
Hides,hvy native steers piece fob-u	n.a.
Wool,64s,staple,Terr del-u,w	n.a.
Grains and Feeds	
Bran,wheat middlings, KC-u,w	146
Corn,No. 2 yellow,Cent IL-bp,u	4.3200
Corn gluten feed,Midwest-u,w	123.9
Corn gluten meal,Midwest-u,w	465.4
Cottonseed meal-u,w	n.a.
Hominy feed,Cent IL-u,w	110
Meat-bonemeal,50% pro Mnpls-u,w	300
Oats,No.2 milling,Mnpls-u	4.2100
Rice, Long Grain Milled, No. 2 AR-u,w	n.a.
Sorghum,(Milo) No.2 Gulf-u	n.a.
SoybeanMeal,Cent IL,rail,ton48%-u,w	328.90
Soybeans,No.1 yllw IL-bp,u	9.6700
Wheat,Spring14%-pro Mnpls-u	7.8725
Wheat,No.2 soft red,St.Louis-u	5.5550
Wheat - Hard - KC (USDA) $ per bu-u	5.5525
Wheat,No.1soft white,Portld,OR-u	6.0500
Food	
Beef,carcass equiv. index	
choice 1-3,600-900 lbs.-u	307.09
select 1-3,600-900 lbs.-u	280.86
Broilers, National comp wtd. avg.-u,w	1.3530
Butter,AA Chicago-d	2.5700
Cheddar cheese,bbl,Chicago-d	187.50
Cheddar cheese,blk,Chicago-d	194.00
Milk,Nonfat dry,Chicago lb.-d	137.00
Coffee,Brazilian,Comp-y	3.2075
Coffee,Colombian, NY-y	3.3658
Eggs,large white,Chicago-u	5.9050
Flour,hard winter KC-p	14.30
Hams,17-20 lbs,Mid-US fob-u	n.a.
Hogs,Iowa-So. Minnesota-u	79.73
Pork bellies,12-14 lb MidUS-u	1.6102
Pork loins,13-19 lb MidUS-u	0.9925
Steers,Tex.-Okla. Choice-u	196.61
Steers,feeder,Okla. City-u,w	n.a.
Fats and Oils	
Degummed corn oil, crude wtd. avg.-u,w	n.a.
Grease,choice white,Chicago-h	0.4000
Lard,Chicago-u	0.4600
Soybean oil,crude;Centl IL-u,w	0.4022
Tallow,bleach;Chicago-h	0.4500
Tallow,edible,Chicago-u	n.a.

KEY TO CODES: A=ask; B=bid; BP=country elevator bids to producers; C=corrected; D=CME; E=Manfra,Tordella & Brookes; H=American Commodities Brokerage Co; K=bi-weekly; M=monthly; N=nominal; n.a.=not quoted or not available; P=Sosland Publishing; R=SNL Energy; S=Platts-TSI; T=Cotlook Limited; U=USDA; V=Benchmark Mineral Intelligence; W=weekly; Y=International Coffee Organization; Z=not quoted. *Data as of 1/3

Source: Dow Jones Market Data

Borrowing Benchmarks | wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Money Rates

January 6, 2025

Key annual interest rates paid to borrow or lend money in U.S. and international markets. Rates below are a guide to general levels but don't always represent actual transactions.

Inflation

	Nov. index level	Chg From (%) Oct. '24	Nov. '23
U.S. consumer price index			
All items	**315.493**	−0.05	2.7
Core	**321.947**	0.06	3.3

International rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Prime rates				
U.S.	**7.50**	7.50	8.50	7.50
Canada	**5.45**	5.45	7.20	5.45
Japan	**1.625**	1.625	1.625	1.475
Policy Rates				
Euro zone	**3.15**	3.15	4.50	3.15
Switzerland	**1.00**	1.00	2.25	1.00
Britain	**4.75**	4.75	5.25	4.75
Australia	**4.35**	4.35	4.35	4.35
Overnight repurchase				
U.S.	**4.29**	4.18	5.45	4.00

U.S. government rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Discount	**4.50**	4.50	5.50	4.50
Federal funds				
Effective rate	**4.3300**	4.3400	5.3400	4.3300
High	**4.5500**	4.5500	5.6500	4.5500
Low	**4.3000**	4.3200	5.3300	4.3000
Bid	**4.3200**	4.3300	5.3300	4.3200
Offer	**4.3300**	4.3600	5.3600	4.3300
Treasury bill auction				
4 weeks	**4.265**	4.260	5.290	4.230
13 weeks	**4.205**	4.230	5.255	4.205
26 weeks	**4.110**	4.135	5.170	4.110

Other short-term rates

	Latest	Week ago	52-Week high	52-Week low
Call money	**6.25**	6.25	7.25	6.25
Commercial paper (AA financial)				
90 days	**4.38**	n.a.	5.39	4.37
Secured Overnight Financing Rate	**4.31**	4.46	5.40	4.30

	Latest	Value Traded	52-Week High	52-Week Low
DTCC GCF Repo Index				
Treasury	**4.286**	29.700	5.471	4.286
MBS	**4.299**	43.940	5.526	4.299

Weekly survey

	Latest	Week ago	Year ago
Freddie Mac			
30-year fixed	**6.91**	6.85	6.62
15-year fixed	**6.13**	6.00	5.89

Notes on data:
U.S. prime rate is the base rate on corporate loans posted by at least 70% of the 10 largest U.S. banks, and is effective December 19, 2024. **Other prime rates** aren't directly comparable; lending practices vary widely by location; **Discount rate** is effective December 19, 2024. **Secured Overnight Financing Rate** is as of January 3, 2025. **DTCC GCF Repo Index** is Depository Trust & Clearing Corp.'s weighted average for overnight trades in applicable CUSIPs. Value traded is in billions of U.S. dollars. **Federal-funds rates** are Tullett Prebon rates as of 5:30 p.m. ET.
Sources: Federal Reserve; Bureau of Labor Statistics; DTCC; FactSet; Tullett Prebon Information, Ltd.

Key Interest Rates

Data are annualized on a 360-day basis. Treasury yields are per annum, on actively traded noninflation and inflation-indexed issues that are adjusted to constant maturities. Data are from weekly Federal Reserve release H.15.

	Week Ended Jan 3	Week Ended Dec 27	52-Week High	52-Week Low
Federal funds (effective)	**4.33**	4.33	5.33	4.33
Commercial paper				
Nonfinancial				
1-month	**4.32**	4.43	5.33	4.32
2-month	**n.a.**	n.a.	5.35	4.44
3-month	**n.a.**	n.a.	5.34	4.41
Financial				
1-month	**4.34**	4.36	5.35	4.34
2-month	**4.37**	4.36	5.34	4.36
3-month	**4.39**	4.37	5.36	4.37
Discount window primary credit	**4.50**	4.50	5.50	4.50
Treasury yields at constant maturities				
1-month	**4.43**	4.44	5.55	4.43
3-month	**4.36**	4.36	5.52	4.36
6-month	**4.25**	4.30	5.43	4.25
1-year	**4.17**	4.23	5.20	3.91
2-year	**4.26**	4.30	4.96	3.55
3-year	**4.29**	4.36	4.81	3.46
5-year	**4.39**	4.44	4.66	3.45
7-year	**4.48**	4.52	4.66	3.55
10-year	**4.58**	4.60	4.65	3.67
20-year	**4.86**	4.85	4.88	4.05
Treasury yields (secondary market)				
1-month	**4.25**	4.25	5.30	4.25
3-month	**4.22**	4.24	5.26	4.22
6-month	**4.14**	4.17	5.17	4.14
TIPS				
5-year	**2.00**	2.05	2.23	1.47
7-year	**2.13**	2.16	2.23	1.50
10-year	**2.24**	2.26	2.26	1.56
20-year	**2.41**	2.40	2.41	1.75
Long-term avg	**2.49**	2.46	2.49	1.86

Notes on data:
Federal-funds rate is an average for the seven days ended Wednesday, weighted according to rates on broker trades; **Commercial paper rates** are discounted offer rates interpolated from sales by discounted averages of dealer bid rates on nationally traded certificates of deposit; **Discount window primary credit rate** is charged for discounts made and advances extended under the Federal Reserve's primary credit discount window program; **rate** is average for seven days ended Wednesday; **Inflation-linked long-term TIPS** average is indexed and is based on the unweighted average bid yields for all TIPS with remaining terms to maturity of 10 years or more;
Sources: Federal Reserve; for additional information on these rate data and their derivation, please see, https://www.federalreserve.gov/datadownload/Build.aspx?rel=H15

Bonds | wsj.com/market-data/bonds/benchmarks

Tracking Bond Benchmarks

Return on investment and spreads over Treasurys and/or yields paid to investors compared with 52-week highs and lows for different types of bonds

Total return close	YTD total return (%)	Index	Yield (%) Latest	Low	High
Broad Market Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
2084.47	-0.2	U.S. Aggregate	4.950	4.100	5.310
U.S. Corporate Indexes Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
3179.63	-0.3	U.S. Corporate	5.380	4.640	5.750
3120.56	-0.1	Intermediate	5.150	4.400	5.670
4103.34	-0.7	Long term	5.860	5.070	5.930
600.12	-0.3	Double-A-rated	5.050	4.260	5.330
865.17	-0.3	Triple-B-rated	5.560	4.850	5.950
High Yield Bonds ICE BofA					
571.88	0.5	High Yield Constrained	7.329	6.975	8.322
594.07	0.7	Triple-C-rated	11.336	11.094	13.872
3808.71	0.5	High Yield 100	6.715	6.208	7.871
498.93	0.4	Global High Yield Constrained	7.086	6.808	8.112
376.05	0.1	Europe High Yield Constrained	5.502	5.331	6.710
U.S Agency Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
1839.96	-0.02	U.S Agency	4.630	3.960	5.190
1633.83	0.03	10-20 years	4.580	3.920	5.190
3400.38	-0.5	20-plus years	5.160	4.240	5.270
2793.71	-0.1	Yankee	5.180	4.380	5.580
Mortgage-Backed Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices					
2058.13	-0.2	Mortgage-Backed	5.310	4.340	5.570
2027.54	-0.2	Ginnie Mae (GNMA)	5.370	4.460	5.550
1212.51	-0.2	Fannie mae (FNMA)	5.290	4.310	5.580
1870.83	-0.2	Freddie Mac (FHLMC)	5.210	4.150	5.510
595.74	0.2	Muni Master	3.438	3.059	3.760
419.89	0.3	7-12 year	3.234	2.724	3.557
482.26	0.3	12-22 year	3.817	3.415	3.982
459.45	0.2	22-plus year	4.294	3.959	4.462
Global Government J.P. Morgan†					
543.08	-0.3	Global Government	3.590	3.010	3.640
828.42	0.01	Canada	3.180	2.910	3.870
360.78	-0.5	EMU§	3.074	2.726	3.365
651.72	-0.6	France	3.270	2.770	3.400
467.18	-0.6	Germany	2.480	2.080	2.770
269.57	-0.2	Japan	1.550	0.990	1.550
509.56	-0.8	Netherlands	2.690	2.290	2.980
779.19	-0.4	U.K.	4.840	4.030	4.840
899.18	0.2	Emerging Markets**	7.577	7.084	8.073

*Constrained indexes limit individual issuer concentrations to 2%; the High Yield 100 are the 100 largest bonds † In local currency § Euro-zone bonds
** EMBI Global Index
Sources: ICE Data Services; Bloomberg Fixed Income Indices; J.P.Morgan

Global Government Bonds: Mapping Yields

Yields and spreads over or under U.S. Treasurys on benchmark two-year and 10-year government bonds in selected other countries; arrows indicate whether the yield rose(▲) or fell (▼) in the latest session

Coupon (%)	Country/ Maturity, in years	Yield (%) Latest	Previous	Month ago	Year ago	Spread Under/Over U.S. Treasurys, in basis points Latest	Prev	Year ago
4.250	U.S. 2	4.270 ▼	4.279	4.095	4.389			
4.250	10	4.616 ▲	4.596	4.150	4.041			
0.500	Australia 2	3.930 ▲	3.875	3.873	3.881	-35.1	-41.2	-52.3
3.500	10	4.480 ▲	4.396	4.234	4.138	-14.0	-20.6	9.3
2.500	France 2	2.389 ▲	2.368	2.185	3.116	-189.2	-192.0	-128.8
3.000	10	3.269 ▼	3.304	2.882	2.675	-135	-129.8	-137.0
2.000	Germany 2	2.192 ▲	2.161	2.013	2.575	-209.0	-212.6	-182.9
2.600	10	2.448 ▲	2.428	2.114	2.159	-217.2	-217.4	-188.6
3.100	Italy 2	2.559 ▲	2.551	2.400	3.130	-172.2	-173.6	-127.4
3.850	10	3.581 ▼	3.601	3.202	3.823	-103.9	-100.1	-22.3
0.600	Japan 2	0.632 ▲	0.603	0.583	0.033	-364.9	-368.4	-437.1
0.900	10	1.129 ▲	1.094	1.053	0.606	-349.1	-350.9	-344.0
2.800	Spain 2	2.363 ▲	2.322	2.269	3.112	-191.8	-196.5	-129.2
3.450	10	3.120 ▲	3.108	2.771	3.124	-150	-149.4	-92.2
4.125	U.K. 2	4.433 ▲	4.411	4.269	4.231	15.2	12.4	-17.3
4.250	10	4.609 ▲	4.597	4.280	3.793	-1.1	-0.5	-25.3

Source: Tullett Prebon, Tradeweb FTSE U.S. Treasury Close

Corporate Debt

Prices of firms' bonds reflect factors including investors' economic, sectoral and company-specific expectations

Investment-grade spreads that tightened the most...

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Spread*, in basis points Current	One-day change	Last week
Toronto–Dominion Bank	TD	4.980	4.63	April 5, '27	37	−17	n.a.
Kimberly–Clark	KMB	6.625	5.20	Aug. 1, '37	58	−8	n.a.
Banco Santander	...	2.749	5.86	Dec. 3, '30	145	−7	n.a.
Netflix	NFLX	5.375	4.95	Nov. 15, '29	54	−5	n.a.
Athene Global Funding	...	5.516	4.92	March 25, '27	65	−4	n.a.
Metropolitan Life Global Funding I	...	4.900	4.99	Jan. 9, '30	58	−4	n.a.
Caterpillar Financial Services	...	4.700	4.83	Nov. 15, '29	41	−3	n.a.
John Deere Capital	...	4.400	5.01	Sept. 8, '31	59	−2	n.a.

...And spreads that widened the most

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Current	One-day change	Last week
Duke Energy Florida	...	6.350	5.66	Sept. 15, '37	104	11	n.a.
GA Global Funding Trust	...	4.400	5.00	Sept. 23, '27	74	9	n.a.
Ares Capital	ARCC	7.000	5.15	Jan. 15, '27	90	7	n.a.
Toronto–Dominion Bank	TD	4.994	5.14	April 5, '29	70	4	n.a.
Toyota Motor Credit	...	4.650	4.87	Jan. 5, '29	45	4	n.a.
Morgan Stanley	MS	3.625	4.60	Jan. 20, '27	33	3	26
Telefonica Emisiones*	...	4.895	6.23	March 6, '48	133	3	136
Citigroup	C	4.450	5.05	Sept. 29, '27	77	2	69

High-yield issues with the biggest price increases...

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Bond Price as % of face value Current	One-day change	Last week
Mauser Packaging Solutions Holding	...	7.875	6.73	April 15, '27	102.375	0.38	101.979
Methanex US Operations	...	6.250	6.34	March 15, '32	99.500	0.36	n.a.
Bath & Body Works	BBWI	6.875	6.44	Nov. 1, '35	103.353	0.27	102.362
Rakuten	...	9.750	7.26	April 15, '29	109.000	0.16	108.850
Transocean	RIG	6.800	9.07	March 15, '38	82.750	0.15	n.a.
Verde Purchaser	...	10.500	8.65	Nov. 30, '30	108.397	0.15	107.500
DISH DBS	...	5.125	16.60	June 1, '29	65.125	0.13	64.738
Teva Pharmaceutical Finance Netherlands III	...	4.100	6.42	Oct. 1, '46	73.000	0.13	n.a.

...And with the biggest price decreases

Issuer	Symbol	Coupon (%)	Yield (%)	Maturity	Current	One-day change	Last week
Santander UK Group Holdings	...	5.625	7.18	Sept. 15, '45	83.408	−0.91	n.a.
Xerox	...	4.800	11.45	March 1, '35	60.650	−0.60	n.a.
Hughes Satellite Systems	...	5.250	10.75	Aug. 1, '26	92.250	−0.50	91.399
Paramount Global*	PARA	6.875	6.77	April 30, '36	100.841	−0.35	101.323
ZF North America Capital	...	4.750	6.43	April 29, '25	99.470	−0.16	99.452

*Estimated spread over 2-year, 3-year, 5-year, 10-year or 30-year hot-run Treasury; 100 basis points=one percentage pt.; change in spread shown is for Z-spread.
Note: Data are for the most active issue of bonds with maturities of two years or more

Source: MarketAxess

Dividend Changes

Company	Symbol	Yld %	Amount New/Old	Frq	Payable / Record
Increased					
Popular Cap Tr II 6.125%	BPOPM	5.9	.1276 /.04253	M	Feb03 /Jan15
Sabine Royalty Tr UBI	SBR	9.5	.4483 /.31117	M	Jan29 /Jan15
Initial					
NewtekOne 8.625% Nts 2029	NEWTH	8.3	.71276		Jan15 /Jan14
Stocks					
111 ADR	YI		1:10		/Jan24
BriaCell Therapeutics	BCTX		1:15		/Jan29
Foreign					
ING Groep ADR	ING	6.4	.16672	SA	Jan23 /Jan13
Safe Bulkers 8% Pfd. C	SBpC	7.8	.50	Q	Jan30 /Jan17
Safe Bulkers Pfd. D	SBpD	7.8	.50	Q	Jan30 /Jan17

Note: Dividend yields as of 3:30 p.m. ET

Sources: FactSet; Dow Jones Market Data

KEY: A: annual; M: monthly; Q: quarterly; r: revised; SA: semiannual; S2:1: stock split and ratio; SO: spin-off.

Insignia Financial Receives Takeover Proposal

By Rhiannon Hoyle

Australian wealth manager **Insignia Financial** said it received a takeover proposal worth about US$1.8 billion from CC Capital Partners, a private investment firm founded and led by ex-Blackstone dealmaker Chinh Chu.

The offer comes roughly two weeks after Insignia rejected a US$1.7 billion takeover proposal from Boston-based Bain Capital, which it said undervalued the company.

Insignia said Monday that CC Capital Partners proposed buying Insignia for 4.30 Australian dollars, or roughly US$2.67, a share on Friday. Bain Capital proposed paying A$4 a share in December.

Shares in the Australian company jumped by nearly 15% in Sydney on Monday.

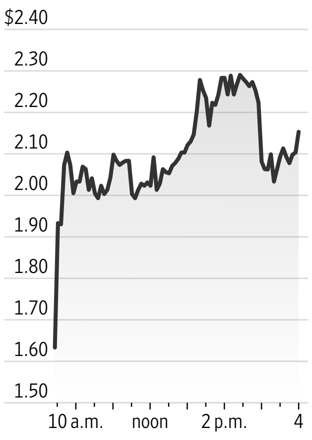
Insignia said it is considering whether it is in the best interests of shareholders to engage with CC Capital. When it rejected Bain's proposal last month, Insignia said the bid didn't adequately represent fair value for shareholders and that it wasn't in their interest to engage with the buyout giant.

Chu started CC Capital after leaving Blackstone in 2015. Over 25 years at Blackstone, he rose to senior managing director and led investments across multiple sectors.

Since then, he has led several blank-check firms, including the one that took snackmaker Utz Brands public, according to CC Capital's website.

FlexShopper Shares Soar After Its Jump in Traffic

FlexShopper share price on Monday



Source: FactSet

By Connor Hart

Shares of **FlexShopper** soared 32% after the company posted an update on its holiday shopping season and fourth-quarter earnings.

The stock closed at $2.15, on Monday, a retreat from its high of $2.30 earlier in the day.

Shares are up around 30% in the past 52 weeks.

The Boca Raton, Fla., company, which provides durable goods, including electronics and home furnishings to underserved consumers on a lease-to-own basis, said total lease originations were 58% higher in 2024's fourth quarter than in the prior year.

In December alone, the company achieved what it said was a record new customer application volume, up more than 45% year over year.

In the fourth quarter overall, application volume for both marketplace and total lease business is up 34% from a year earlier, the company said.

Chief Executive Officer Russ Heiser said the company expects to continue growing in 2025, thanks in part to prior-period lease originations, which are recognized as lease revenue and will benefit financial results in future quarters.

MicroStrategy Purchases $101 Million Of Bitcoin

By Vicky Ge Huang

MicroStrategy, the software-intelligence company turned bitcoin-holding entity, said Monday it bought $101 million of bitcoin during the last two trading days of 2024.

MicroStrategy said it bought 1,070 bitcoins. It paid an average of $94,004 per coin in cash, including fees and expenses. It now holds about 447,470 bitcoins worth about $44 billion.

The company said late Friday it plans to raise as much as $2 billion by selling perpetual preferred stock in the first quarter to fund more bitcoin purchases. MicroStrategy unveiled a plan last year to raise $42 billion in capital over three years through stock and bond offerings to buy bitcoin.

Exchange-Traded Portfolios

Largest 100 exchange-traded funds. Preliminary close data as of 4:30 p.m. ET

Monday, January 6, 2025

ETF	Symbol	Closing Price	Chg (%)	YTD (%)
CommSvsSPDR	XLC	98.94	1.08	2.2
CnsmrDiscSel	XLY	226.77	0.39	1.1
DimenUSCoreEq2	DFAC	35.10	0.46	1.5
EnSelSectorSPDR	XLE	87.07	–0.46	1.6
FinSelSectorSPDR	XLF	48.44	–0.31	0.2
GrayscaleBitcoin	GBTC	81.04	3.87	9.5
HealthCrSelSect	XLV	139.02	0.04	1.1
IndSelSectorSPDR	XLI	132.43	–0.22	0.5
InvscNasd100	QQQM	215.93	1.16	2.6
InvscQQQI	QQQ	524.54	1.15	2.6
InvscS&P500EW	RSP	176.20	–0.07	0.6
iShBitcoin	IBIT	58.17	3.95	9.7
iShCoreDivGrowth	DGRO	61.34	–0.29	...
iShCoreMSCIEAFE	IEFA	71.11	0.89	1.2
iShCoreMSCIEM	IEMG	52.75	0.29	1.0
iShCoreMSCITotInt	IXUS	66.81	0.66	1.0
iShCoreS&P500	IVV	598.30	0.62	1.6
iShCoreS&P MC	IJH	63.02	0.17	1.1
iShCoreS&P SC	IJR	116.22	–0.01	0.9
iShCoreS&PTotUS	ITOT	130.81	0.58	1.7
iShCoreS&PUSGrw	IUSG	143.06	1.04	2.7
iShCoreS&PUSVal	IUSV	92.93	0.09	0.4
iShCoreTotUSDBd	IUSB	45.10	–0.09	–0.2
iShCoreUSAggBd	AGG	96.71	–0.10	–0.2
iShEdgeMSCIMinUSA	USMV	88.61	–0.55	–0.2
iShEdgeMSCIUSAQual	QUAL	180.00	0.39	1.1
iShGoldTr	IAU	49.74	–0.10	0.5
iShiBoxx$IGCpBd	LQD	106.33	–0.25	–0.5
iShMBS	MBB	91.38	–0.11	–0.3
iShMSCIACWI	ACWI	119.31	0.69	1.5
iShMSCI EAFE	EFA	76.40	0.95	1.0
iShNatlMuniBd	MUB	106.64	0.06	0.1
iSh1-5YIGCpBd	IGSB	51.69	–0.02	–0.0
iSh1-3YTreaBd	SHY	81.98	0.02	...
iShRussMC	IWR	89.53	0.08	1.3
iShRuss1000	IWB	327.62	0.58	1.7
iShRuss1000Grw	IWF	411.96	1.17	2.6
iShRuss1000Val	IWD	186.30	–0.11	0.6
iShRuss2000	IWM	224.52	0.04	1.6
iShS&P500Grw	IVW	104.35	1.05	2.8
iShS&P500Value	IVE	191.51	0.03	0.3
iShSelectDiv	DVY	131.00	–0.67	–0.2
iSh7-10YTreaBd	IEF	92.26	–0.10	–0.2
iSh20+YTreaBd	TLT	86.90	–0.45	–0.5
iShUSTech	IYW	164.87	1.54	3.4
iShUSTreasuryBd	GOVT	22.43	–0.04	–2.4
iSh0-3MTreaBd	SGOV	100.37	...	0.0
JPMNasdEqPrem	JEPQ	57.61	0.93	2.2
JPM EqPrem	JEPI	57.91	–0.12	0.7
JPM UltShIncm	JPST	50.42	0.04	0.1
PacerUSCashCows	COWZ	57.13	0.23	1.2
ProShUltPrQQQ	TQQQ	85.21	3.41	7.7
SPDRBbg1-3MTB	BIL	91.47	0.01	0.0
SPDR DJIA Tr	DIA	427.13	–0.01	0.4
SPDR Gold	GLD	243.19	–0.12	0.4
SPDRPtfDevxUS	SPDW	34.61	0.99	1.4
SPDRS&P500Value	SPYV	51.30	0.02	0.3
SPDRPtfS&P500	SPLG	70.03	0.57	1.6
SPDRS&P500Growth	SPYG	90.36	1.11	2.8
SPDR S&P 500	SPY	595.36	0.58	1.6
SchwabIntEquity	SCHF	18.74	0.97	1.3
SchwabUS BrdMkt	SCHB	23.09	0.61	1.7
SchwabUS Div	SCHD	27.27	–0.62	–0.2
SchwabUS LC	SCHX	23.61	0.68	1.9
SchwabUS LC Grw	SCHG	28.67	1.24	2.9
SPDR S&PMdCpTr	MDY	576.02	0.16	1.1
SPDR S&P Div	SDY	130.74	–0.84	–1.0
TechSelectSector	XLK	238.75	1.27	2.7
VanEckSemicon	SMH	260.23	3.32	7.5
VangdSC Val	VBR	199.46	0.01	0.6
VangdExtMkt	VXF	194.76	0.53	2.5
VangdSC Grwth	VBK	287.23	0.35	2.6
VangdDivApp	VIG	195.89	–0.14	0.0
VangdFTSEAWxUS	VEU	57.94	0.64	0.9
VangdFTSEDevMk	VEA	48.47	0.98	1.4
VangdFTSE EM	VWO	44.13	–0.02	0.2
VangdGrowth	VUG	421.21	1.13	2.6
VangdHiDiv	VYM	128.10	–0.25	0.4
VangdInfoTech	VGT	641.58	1.37	3.2
VangdIntermBd	BIV	74.56	–0.12	–0.2
VangdIntrCorpBd	VCIT	80.07	–0.09	–0.2
VangdIntermTrea	VGIT	57.93	–0.03	–0.1
VangdLC	VV	274.39	0.62	1.7
VangdMegaGrwth	MGK	352.28	1.17	2.6
VangdMC	VO	267.27	0.07	1.2
VangdMBS	VMBS	45.19	–0.11	–0.3
VangdRealEst	VNQ	88.30	–1.29	–0.9
VangdRuss1000Grw	VONG	105.99	1.15	2.6
VangdS&P500ETF	VOO	547.57	0.58	1.6
VangdST Bond	BSV	77.22	0.03	–0.1
VangdSTCpBd	VCSH	77.99	...	–0.0
VangdShortTrea	VGSH	58.18	0.03	...
VangdSC	VB	243.88	0.16	1.5
VangdTaxExemptBd	VTEB	50.21	0.04	0.2
VangdTotalBd	BND	71.78	–0.10	–0.2
VangdTotIntlBd	BNDX	48.96	...	–0.2
VangdTotIntlStk	VXUS	59.60	0.78	1.1
VangdTotalStk	VTI	294.70	0.56	1.7
VangdTotWrldStk	VT	119.18	0.62	1.4
VangdValue	VTV	170.12	–0.14	0.5

STOCK SPOTLIGHT

Uber
The ride-hail and food-delivery company announced a $1.5 billion accelerated share-repurchase program. The company's shares jumped 2.7% on Monday. Ride-share rival Lyft rose 0.8% as well.

Foxconn
The assembler of Apple and Nvidia products raked in record quarterly revenue, helped by strong demand for servers to power artificial-intelligence technologies. Shares rose nearly 2% in Taiwan.

Nvidia
Foxconn's results boosted the chip stock by 3.4%. Other chip players also climbed, including Advanced Micro Devices, which gained 3.3%; Micron Technology, which soared nearly 11%; and Broadcom, which increased 1.7%.

U.S. Steel and Nippon Steel
The companies said they were suing Washington over the Biden administration's decision to block their $14.1 billion tie-up. Shares of the American steelmaker gained 8.1%, while Nippon Steel's stock slipped nearly 0.10% in Japan.

FuboTV and Disney
Disney agreed to combine its Hulu + Live TV streaming service with sports-focused FuboTV, a deal that will also end pending litigation over the formation of Venu Sports, a joint streaming venture between Disney's ESPN, Warner Bros. Discovery and Fox Corp. FuboTV shares more than tripled, while Disney's stock edged down 0.1%.

McDonald's
The Chicago-based restaurant chain said Monday that it is scrapping set diversity targets for its employees and suppliers, the latest large company to overhaul its strategies for diversity, equity and inclusion. The company's shares declined 0.88%.

Plug Power
Shares of the clean-energy startup surged 20%. The Treasury Department issued new rules on Friday for companies trying to get tax breaks for making hydrogen.

Ulta Beauty
The cosmetics retailer named Kecia Steelman as its chief executive officer, succeeding David Kimbell, as the company aims to reaccelerate its growth amid a global slowdown in the beauty market. Shares of Ulta closed down 0.01%.

TUESDAY'S EVENTS:
Job openings data: The JOLTS report is due at 10 a.m. Economists polled by The Wall Street Journal expect there were 7.7 million job openings as of November, the same as a month earlier.

EARNINGS EXPECTED:
RPM International

AUCTION RESULTS

Here are the results of Monday's Treasury auctions. All bids are awarded at a single price at the market-clearing yield. Rates are determined by the difference between that price and the face value.

	13-Week	26-Week
Applications	$257,260,607,800	$233,970,010,600
Accepted bids	$88,511,883,800	$75,866,858,600
" noncomp	$2,319,312,000	$1,798,495,800
" foreign noncomp	$100,000,000	$205,000,000
Auction price (rate)	98.937069	97.922167
	(4.205%)	(4.110%)
	4.309%	4.256%
Bids at clearing yield accepted	83.88%	86.16%
	912797NB9	912797LW5

Both issues are dated Jan. 9, 2025. The 13-week bills mature on April 10, 2025; the 26-week bills mature on July 10, 2025.

THREE-YEAR NOTES

Applications	$164,500,444,800
Accepted bids	$70,744,832,300
" noncompetitively	$250,354,100
" foreign noncompetitively	$0
Auction price (rate)	99.771622
	(4.332%)
Interest rate	4.250%
Bids at clearing yield accepted	84.31%
Cusip number	91282CMF5

The notes, dated Jan. 15, 2025, mature on Jan. 15, 2028.

HEARD ON THE STREET
FINANCIAL ANALYSIS & COMMENTARY

Healthcare Stocks Offer Opportunities

The entire space has been struggling, from pharmaceutical companies to hospitals

Donald Trump's election win prompted even more bullishness in a stock market. For healthcare investors, it represented yet another reason to dump some stock.

Trump's appointment of industry skeptics like Robert F. Kennedy Jr., alongside expectations of a Republican crackdown on programs like Medicaid and Obamacare, has prompted a selloff in everything from hospitals to pharmaceuticals, health insurers and biotech.

The election jitters exacerbated what had been a tough period for the industry. In 2023, healthcare underperformed the S&P 500 by about 22 percentage points, so many believed that 2024 would be a bounce-back year.

Instead, history repeated itself, with yet another 20-percentage-point underperformance for healthcare. That created a valuation gap that looks like a historic aberration: The Health Care Select Sector ETF is trading at a discount of more than 20% to the S&P 500 based on their forward earnings multiples, far larger than the average 5% discount seen over the past two decades, according to FactSet.

The market bearishness is partly due to fundamentals. At a time when the U.S. economy is on solid footing and tech companies are riding high on the artificial-intelligence frenzy, most healthcare subsectors seem to be caught in a negative earnings-revision cycle, writes Asad Haider, a healthcare equity strategist at Goldman Sachs.

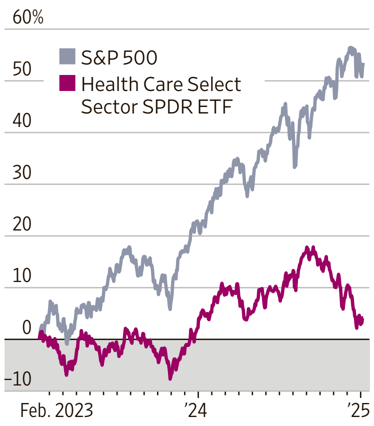
The reasons are idiosyncratic. For health insurers, it was due to higher-than-expected postpandemic costs as people returned in droves to hospitals and doctors. For the pharmaceutical sector, some of the profitability issues stemmed from higher acquisition-related charges as the industry seeks to make up for low growth with dealmaking. But the bottom line is that in a red-hot market, healthcare simply isn't where investors want to be. Since the start of 2023, Goldman data shows healthcare with the second-biggest outflows among S&P 500 sector ETFs, behind energy.

Normally, this is when a savvy investor might note that if the economy hits the skids, healthcare could offer a safe haven. The sector has typically acted as a hedge against market downturns due to its nondiscretionary nature, and 2022, when investors feared a hard landing, did work that way. But even the industry's traditional defensive appeal has faded.

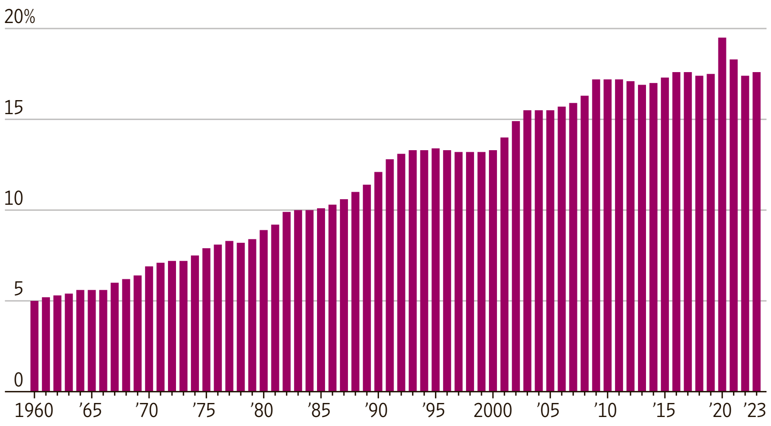
Since the election, "the constant barrage of regulatory, political, clinical, and competitive dynamics prevents greater protection as it relates to stock volatility," notes Jared Holz, a healthcare-sector specialist at Mizuho. In recent trading, notes Goldman's Haider, healthcare seems to have decoupled from other defensive groups.

The good news is 2025 may not be much worse. History suggests that when political uncertainty drives the sector sharply down, it tends to bounce back as policy outcomes turn out to be less severe than initially feared. Given many Republicans aren't on board with the RFK agenda and the emerging divisions within MAGA-land, a hard-hitting overhaul of any part of the industry would be an uphill battle. Early signs of political dysfunction are already on display, resulting in failure to pass a budget compromise that included reform of the pharmacy-benefit-management industry. But the issue for investors is that it is hard to time when the policy overhang will lift.

Index and ETF performance over the past two years



National health expenditure as a percentage of GDP



Sources: FactSet (performance); Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (expenditure)


MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR WSJ

The surest way to outperform is innovation, like with Lilly's obesity drugs.

For now, Haider suggests the best way to play healthcare is probably to continue betting on single stocks that offer a growing product. Such companies typically command a higher multiple than the rest of the industry, but they are the ones that continue to drive the sector's gains. Obvious industry leaders include **Intuitive Surgical** and **Eli Lilly**. Lilly returned 32% last year, while Intuitive returned 55%. Another way to play the sector is by betting on companies like **CVS Health** or **Pfizer**, whose stocks are trading at historically depressed levels while still offering sustainable business models and high dividends.

Zooming out, the political pressure will wax and wane, but it won't totally go away simply because U.S. healthcare expenditure is so high. Health spending in the U.S. has exploded from about 5% of gross domestic product 50 years ago to roughly 17% to 18% today, a number that is significantly higher than other rich nations. While high, that ratio has been relatively stagnant for the past 15 years—apart from an increase during the pandemic—suggesting political and fiscal realities won't allow the industry to outgrow the economy forever. The surest way to outperform peers at this point is by offering indispensable innovation, like with Lilly's obesity drugs and Intuitive's state-of-the art surgical robots.

Uncertainty for the healthcare industry isn't going away anytime soon. But that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of opportunities.

—*David Wainer*